

TEN MONTHS AMONG THE TENTS OF
THE TUSKI.



TEN MONTHS

AMONG

THE TENTS OF THE TUSKI,

WITH INCIDENTS OF AN

ARCTIC BOAT EXPEDITION IN SEARCH OF
SIR JOHN FRANKLIN,

AS FAR AS THE MACKENZIE RIVER, AND CAPE BATHURST.

BY LIEUT. W. H. HOOPER, R.N.

WITH A MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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TO

JOHN BARROW, Esq. F.R.S.

&c. &c. &c.

ADMIRALTY.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WHEN engaged in the first Arctic expedition (H.M.S. Plover, with my esteemed friend Captain Moore) despatched from England in search of H.M. Discovery Ships Erebus and Terror, (under command of the gallant Sir John Franklin,) in the equipment of which your honoured and lamented father bore so prominent a part, I wrote letters to my friends relating my first impressions of scenes and incidents encountered in a remote corner of the globe, during a long residence amongst an almost hitherto unknown race of people. You saw some of these letters, expressed approval of and interest in

them, and suggested their being thrown together and submitted to a wider circle for perusal. Hence the following pages, by illness long deferred.

Not alone the strong tie of friendship induced me to crave your permission to dedicate this book to you, but also the knowledge that you have ever stood foremost among those who, verbally and practically, have evinced their conviction that it would be cruel and would be a lasting disgrace to this country to relinquish the search for the missing voyagers until definitive information respecting them shall be obtained, or the lapse of time render an assertion of their being no longer in existence no mere hypothesis.

On another plea also I ask you to stand sponsor to my literary babe (and herein I feel assured I speak for many of those who, like myself, have wandered amid the stern and chilling regions of the North). There can be few "Arctic men" who will not unite with me in earnest acknowledgment of your ever willing aid (not the less energetic because unob-

trusively exerted) towards their particular welfare, as well as to the more general furtherance of the schemes of humanity in which they were engaged, and the great exertions you have gone through.

You are well aware that I have always entertained the most sanguine views with regard to the discovery ships; and that, notwithstanding nearly eight years have elapsed since tidings were received, I still see no reason to despair. A mass of evidence is before us* to show that the Polar regions abound in animal life: the cases of four Russian sailors who spent six years on Spitzbergen, 1743-9, and that of Sir John Ross and party, who were four years ice-bound, afford precedents for the existence of the party now sought for; and when we consider moreover that only the *mere* portals have yet been passed, and scarcely the threshold entered upon of that vast unknown region, in *any* part of which it is possible the missing voyagers may be detained, we may relieve ourselves from fear of a charge of unreasonableness or obstinacy in the persistence of earnest *hope* that

* Wrangell, Anjou, Parry, Richardson, Petermann, &c.

their families—whose sad suspense all must deeply commiserate—their native country, and the entire civilised world, will yet welcome with transports of delight the return of at least a portion of the veteran wanderers.

With sincerest regard and esteem,

I am yours faithfully,

WM. HULME HOOPER.

LONDON, *May* 1, 1853.

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THE TENTS OF THE TUSKI.

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THE attention of the Admiralty having been drawn to the protracted absence of the two Arctic Discovery Ships, "Erebus" and "Terror," which sailed from England, under the command of Sir John Franklin, in the spring of 1845, and of which no tidings had been received, it was determined in the autumn of 1847, after mature consideration of the opinions of those most experienced in Arctic affairs, to despatch three expeditions as early as possible in 1848 to different quarters of the frozen sea, for the purpose of seeking, and, if necessary, relieving the missing voyagers.

Had the expedition become checked in its earlier career, Sir James Ross proceeding up Davis' Straits might expect to fall in with the party. ' Were it stopped between the eastern and western channels leading to the Polar Sea, some of Franklin's people in that case would probably be despatched to the northern continent of America ; it was necessary, therefore, to send an expedition thither ; this was undertaken by Sir John Richardson. A third locality remained, which it would have been imprudent to neglect. Conjecturing the entrance and medium passage to the westward to have been accomplished, exit had yet to be made by a region little visited, of which the great opening from the North Pacific into the Arctic Ocean, known as Behring's Strait, claimed paramount attention.

For the last-named quarter H. M. S. "Plover," under Commander T. E. L. Moore (an officer peculiarly fitted for this charge by his previous experience in Arctic and Antarctic travel), set sail from Plymouth on the 30th January, 1848.

I do not desire to enter here upon a recital of either the fitting out or our voyage through regions interesting indeed, but already well known. Suffice it to say that after touching at Madeira and the Falklands, rounding Cape Horn and visiting Callao, we arrived at Honolulu, the capital of Woahu,

the chief of the Sandwich Islands, on the 23rd of August, 1848, the voyage having been greatly protracted by calms and contrary winds, and the very indifferent sailing qualities of our vessel. This town presents from the outer anchorage the most picturesque type of a tropical village in all its loveliness. It extends along the sea-shore for about two miles; the houses are grouped in small clusters, surrounded by luxuriant plantations of sugar-cane, banana, and other fructiferants of torrid climes, surmounted by the lofty palm.

With the exception of the public edifices and a few of the better class of houses, which are built of brick, stone, or even slabs of coral, the habitations are for the most part only rude huts, yet neat and cleanly-looking from a distance: from their sombre hue, they present a fine contrast to the varied tints of tree and herbage here exhibited. I thought it a perfect paradise. The sweet tale of Paul and Virginia, with the description of their home, came across my memory, and I pictured their land to be such an one as this.

In the bay were numerous diminutive fishing-boats, each with an outrigger to prevent it from overturning, so narrow and frail are they. This curious balance is composed of a branch of considerable thickness, with a straight stem about five feet in length, terminating

in a flattened fork, which ever and again, as the wee shell rocks to and fro, dips in the water and steadies her motion ; and in this way with paddle or sail, or both, they skim along over the waves.

The residents at Honolulu are principally Americans, who engross much of the trade ; there are also a few Chinese shops, where this antiquated people may be seen in their national dress and surrounded by their native products—Japanned-ware, crapes, silks, ivory carved-work, &c., for which they find a ready sale. There are several churches and meeting-houses ; also one or two large manufactories and warehouses, conspicuous from their size compared with the surrounding buildings. On the right of the town is the harbour, in which were many vessels ; among others, several American whalers refitting for their return home ; and the old “Basilisk” lies here dismantled and deserted. I regarded her with great interest, remembering the many important matters in which she took her part, more particularly in the French affair with Queen Pomaré.

Honolulu cannot certainly be lauded for cleanliness nor the regularity of its construction : dirt abundantly displays itself, and in the streets we were enveloped in clouds of dust. The natives appear finely-limbed, muscular, and of good stature. The young people have handsome and somewhat intellectual countenances, with

splendid eyes, large and sparkling, having the fire and dark hue of the Indian ; their complexions are of the richest deep brown, some approaching copper colour ; and the skin so clear, that the blood can be seen mantling in their cheeks. Old age seems to transmute all their charms into ugliness, for the few aged persons I saw were mostly hideous. At night we were delighted in viewing the natives fishing by torch-light : in the frail canoes I have before noticed brands composed of the fibrous husk of the cocoa-nut emitted a lurid glare, and being in great numbers and constant motion imparted a Salvator-Rosa-like effect to the scene ; the softened gleam upon the shore was very beautiful, throwing up the more prominent objects, whose broad shadows, rendered deeper and more perfect by the blaze, mingled with and were lost in the gloom of the background.

It was intended that in accordance with our instructions we should have met H. M. S. "Herald," which was to co-operate with us, at Panama, but the plan of our route having been changed we had not visited that port, and hoped to have found her here ; in this expectation we were, however, disappointed ; and after obtaining a plentiful supply of tropical fruits and vegetables, proceeded alone on the 25th, trusting to fall in with her in Kötzebue Sound.

Having now quitted our last touching point, all our attention was directed to preparing for our winter sojourn. Warm clothing was distributed; cloaks and socks of the fur-seal skin made up, and ice gear fitted and inspected. In anticipation of boat expeditions crews were appointed, and their several supplies apportioned, strong hopes being entertained of doing something before being frozen in.

Some fine meteors were seen early in September, and black gull and whale birds observed in considerable numbers: a plover flew on board, a goodly omen, and dolphins gathered round the vessel. On the 9th we saw stormy petrels and sea swallows; and the former, true to their popular reputation, proved harbingers of a heavy gale. The weather moderating, the nautilus was seen outspreading his tiny sail.

Towards the end of the month the presence of numerous birds, as well as quantities of sea weed, indicated the proximity of land; on the 27th, at no great distance from Madenoi or Copper Island,—with the exception of Behring's Island, the westernmost of the group,—we passed between the Aleutian or Fox Islands, and the main-land of Kamtchatka.

As these islands were among the first-fruits of the discovery from the west of the western coast of the North American continent, it may not be inappropriate

to introduce here some slight account of their history and native inhabitants.

The sagacious mind of Peter the Great having been stimulated by accounts collected from Kamtchadals, and transmitted to St. Petersburg, concerning the vicinity of the north-eastern point of Asia to the north-western angle of America, devised an expedition to ascertain their correctness; this, however, was delayed, by his death; but the Empress Catharine, in accordance with his written instructions, immediately on ascending the throne, despatched Vitus Beering, or, as he is more commonly called, Behring, a native of Denmark in the Russian service, to obtain information on this point. On the 14th of July, 1728, he left the river Kamtchatka in the "Fortune," with two lieutenants and forty men; and having coasted the Kamtchadal, Koriak, and Tchutskoi countries as far as $67^{\circ} 18'$ north, returned, having unawares passed but a very few miles through the Straits which now bear his name. This unconsciousness is rather curious, as he had some intercourse with people in their boats, who would seem to have been Tchutski, who inhabit a country on the coast of Asia, within thirty miles of the American continent; they, however, informed him that their nation, although travelling with rein-deer as far as the Kovyma, or Kolyma,

which runs into the Northern Ocean, had never attempted any passage by sea. He therefore returned home disappointed in the object of his search.

He again made the attempt in 1729, but failed from adverse winds. No further effort was made till 1741, when Behring again sailed with Tschirikof on their notable enterprise in their two vessels, the "St. Peter" and "St. Paul;" and steering to the E.S.E., and S.E. by E., reached the continent of America on the 15th of July. The precise position of the spot has been much contested, but there is good reason to suppose he landed in the immediate neighbourhood of Kayes Island, lat. 60° N., long. $144^{\circ} 30'$ W. It again seems strange that Behring should thus have proceeded so far to the east without reaching land, as the whole range of Aleutian or Fox Islands, with the promontory of Alaska, lay directly in the course between the points of his departure from Asia and arrival in America, extending in a scattered line from America to within ten degrees of the Kamtchatkan coast. In the beginning of September, on their return voyage, the expedition fell in with the chain of the Fox Islands, and on the 6th of November landed on Behring's Island, ~~and~~ first supposing it to be the mainland of Avatcha; here they suffered great misery and sickness, and on the 8th of November Behring died.

THE immense quantity of animal life which then existed on these islands, may be gathered from the fact that on one short expedition in 1750, the large numbers of 1781 sea otters, 720 blue foxes, and 840 young sea bears were taken, and their furs and skins carried back by one vessel to the Russian territories.

The inhabitants are described by the admirable and sagacious Steller, who accompanied Behring, as mostly young or middle-aged, of moderate stature, but tolerably well-proportioned; their arms and legs very fleshy, their hair straight and of a glossy blackness, the nose flat but not broad or large, the eyes black, the lips thick and turned upward; necks short, shoulders broad, and bodies thick but not corpulent. They wore shirts made of the intestines of whales; boots and breeches of seal-skin, stained a brown red with alder bark; and had long iron knives, apparently their own manufacture (though he throws some doubt on this point later in his narrative). They made hats of bark which were coloured red and green, and ornamented with feathers and grass; and bored holes in various parts of the face, in which they inserted bones and stones. They had little or no beard.

They seemed to migrate from island to island,

and many to the mainland of America, and were accustomed to tattoo their faces with a red-hot needle.

Otchcredin, who made a lengthened visit in 1770, describes the Fox Islands as generally rocky, but destitute of wood, and abounding with rivulets and lakes which contain very little fish; the population, free and numerous; living principally in holes dug in the earth, and subsisting on sea animals and small shell-fish, with the wild lily-root as their greatest luxury. •

Dr. Latham, in his "Varieties of Man," asserts that the inhabitants of these islands, including Behring's, Copper, Rat, Andreanowsky, and Prebülöwüni, are all of Esquimaux origin; this he principally infers from the radical construction of the language.

To Captain Cook, our own enterprising navigator, belongs the merit of the true discovery of the Straits between the two continents, although, with his usual good taste and modesty, he gave to them the name of Behring, in honour of, as he supposed, the first European who ever navigated those seas. There is now, however, little ground for reasonable doubt, although the fact long remained involved in obscurity, that to Simeon Deshnew, or Deshnef, may be attributed the first passage of them by civilised man. Iseai Ignatiew,

who is the first person recorded to have attempted the navigation of the Polar Ocean, sailed from Kolymsk, east of Kolyma, in 1646; but only reached Tchaun Bay. He obtained some walrus teeth by barter with the Tchutski dwelling there, and described them as a warlike people. His accounts induced the Fedot Alexiew, agent to a Moscow merchant, to make an expedition in June, 1647, from the Kolyma, designing to reach the Anadyr. Attached to his mission was the Cossack Simcon Deshnew, or Deshnef, as government representative. Difficulties obliged them to return; and in 1648 a second expedition was commenced, consisting of seven vessels, of which four were probably lost, as further accounts have reached us of only three. Deshnew seems to have had a favourable season; and, passing Chelagskoi Noss, made his way eastward and to the south, until he reached the Gulf of Anadyr. He does not appear, however, to have had any knowledge of the proximity of the coast of America. With these few remarks let us now resume our own voyage.

We steered north-west for the island of St. Lawrence, which lies in the fair way to the entrance of Behring's Straits; and struck soundings on the 5th of October in 150 fathoms; on the same date we first experienced snow. A large number of

geese were seen flying to the southward, a notable token of the winter setting in.

Headwinds and strong currents now much impeded our progress, and we only sighted the island of St. Lawrence early in the morning of 13th October: during the night of the 15th, we drifted so far to the north-west, that at three A.M., in the morning, the coast of Asia, near the Tchutskoi Noss, was discovered, with huts and signs of life visible on the shore. Here was a deep indentation, with the appearance of a river, which boats were despatched to examine. Meanwhile, the natives were evidently not unconscious of our presence: much bustle was observable among them, and after considerable running to and fro, they launched four boats, and pulled towards us, with signs of trepidation. Their diffidence being at length overcome, they paddled alongside, and climbed on board.

This was our first interview with the Tchutski, a people of whom less is known than any on the face of the habitable globe (if we except, perhaps, some of the tribes in the interior of Africa); and whose manners and appearance are so singular as to deserve a more particular notice hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

Notices of Visits to Tchutski.—Cook and Billings, &c.—Wrangell's Laments. — Paucity of information. — First communication with Tchutski.—Ludicrous Mistaké respecting Sex.—Attempts at Conversation.—Visit the Shore.—See real Women.—Delectable Repast.—First Theft.—Council of Officers.—Curious Hut.—Thermometer Jack.—Gale.—Detention of Natives.—Their Feast.—Tchutski Honour.—Move into Winter Quarters.—First Visit to Natives.—An interesting Infant.—Funny Fiddler.—The Sheep.—The House.—First Impressions.—The Masquerade.—The Missionary.—The Drama.

A COMBINATION of untoward circumstances had driven us on a coast and among a people rarely visited. Cook, ranking only second to Columbus among navigators, was the first who touched upon this shore, in 1778: his was but a flying visit, as he merely landed for about a couple of hours near the Tchutskoi Noss, and then re-embarked never to return, although doubtless his intention was to have made further acquaintance with so interesting a country. Behring, in 1728, communicated with the people of this coast, in latitude $64^{\circ} 30'$ north, near the Tchutskoi Noss. The eight natives who visited him in a baidar, stated that the coast trended to the

westward, and spoke of an island not far distant, which he discovered two days after, and called St. Lawrence; but neither he nor Lieutenant Synd, who in 1767 visited this island, and was close to the main, seem to have thought it worth while to land or make further inquiry respecting this 'isolated nation. Billings, an officer in the Russian service, who had been with Cook in his voyage to the North Pacific, anchored in the Bay of St. Lawrence (not St. Lawrence Island) on the 4th August, 1790; he does not appear to have made any lengthened sojourn, nor to have endeavoured to learn much respecting the people; but proceeded at once to the River Kolyma, a journey which occupied six months, and thence to St. Petersburg. We have learned little concerning the Tchutski by his experience. Simeon Novikof and Ivan Baccof, proceeding in 1749 from Anadyrsk to Kamtchatka by sea, saw a few Tchutski upon the heights of their coast on the gulf.

These notices appear to comprehend nearly all that is known of this people, until the expedition of Wrangell, in 1821, when Matiuschin gained sufficient casual experience of them at the fair of Ostronowie and elsewhere, to create in his own mind and that of Baron Wrangell an intense desire to extend their knowledge of that extraordinary race.

The pages of the latter are full of lament at his not having succeeded in his attempts to visit them. Since his journey no new account has been received ; and the further information which I was able to collect will, therefore, not be unacceptable. Our acquaintance with the Tchutski during our stay on their shores was so interwoven with our own existence and its occupations, that it would be matter of great difficulty to describe minutely, apart from some account of ourselves, such of their manners and habits as came under our notice.

We had at first considerable doubts as to the sex of our visitants ; all were clad in loose hooded overshirts of skin, to keep them dry ; and, being destitute of beards, might well be mistaken for the tender sex ; but we concluded that the party was of a mixed nature, this opinion having its foundation, probably, in the fact that some had their heads partially shaved. Many endeavours were made to establish verbal intercourse. Parry's vocabulary, and the few words mentioned by Wrangell, were essayed, but all to no purpose ; they continually repeated " tam," afterwards found to mean " no ;" and our expressions of vexation at the ill success of our efforts sounded, in many instances, like their word of dissent. So we had recourse to signs, and succeeded admirably, and

speedily got on a very good footing. The fiddle was produced for their amusement, and in return we were regaled by the monotonous beating of a species of drum, which they had brought with them.

Two of their number, who seemed more intelligent than the rest, and took the most prominent share in their doings, and were, therefore, conjectured to be chiefs, informed us, by signs, of a convenient harbour close to our position, and of their desire that we should enter it. To ascertain the accuracy of their report, Captain Moore sent me on shore to examine, the two natives before alluded to accompanying me in the boat without the slightest trepidation. By their direction, I landed on the beach near their huts, and, surmounting the shingly bank which had been formed by the ice forcing up the shore, became in an instant the centre of attraction to a varied group of men, women, children, and dogs. It was now easy to discover that we had as yet seen only men, the women were readily distinguished by the difference of their costume and other details. Having made the necessary observations, I took leave of my companions, and returned to the ship.

On the morrow natives again visited us ; and one of those whom we had yesterday supposed to be chiefs, and who informed us that his name was Akoull,

assisted in piloting us into the harbour before indicated, in the entrance to which we anchored under the lee of a spit projecting in a curve nearly half a mile from the shore. The temperature became very much reduced during the night, and ice formed around the ship sufficient to cut through a lead line which hung from the "chains."

On the 18th the harbour was covered with a crust of ice which only melted away in the noon-day sun. We were again visited by the natives, among whom were now some women; and on their making signs for something to eat, one of the ladies was presented, as a jest, with a small tallow candle, called a purser's dip. It was, notwithstanding, a very pleasant joke to the damsel; who deliberately munched it up with evident relish, and finally drew the wick between her set teeth to clear off any remaining morsels of fat. This was rather too much for some of us, unaccustomed to such sights; but it was a mere trifle to scenes often afterwards witnessed.

At night the first appearance of *Aurora Borealis* was presented at N.W. by W., with rays converging to the zenith. We were engaged on the 19th in a search for water, but the rivulets were already frozen up; we were consequently obliged to fill our tanks with ice. The natives being, as usual, on

board, one of the many thermometers was missed, and had evidently been purloined by one of our visitors.

The strong adverse winds having continued hitherto, on the 20th the Captain called a council of officers, who, after much deliberation, recommended that, unless a favourable change of circumstances should occur sufficient to warrant the expectation of reaching Kötzebue Sound by the 26th, the "Plover" should winter in the commodious harbour where she then was.

The natives were informed of the loss of the thermometer, and on whom our suspicions rested. Parties were sent on shore at the spit to take observations, and to cut turf wherewith to eke out the winter's fuel. Here, besides fragments of bones of whales, we discovered a winter hut or yourt, much dilapidated, and apparently long abandoned; it was constructed partly by excavation; the upper part appeared to be of mud and shingle; around the interior, which formed an irregular ellipse, seats had been cut in the soil.

On the 22nd (Sunday) Divine Service was performed. The natives were allowed to come on board, but bartering was prohibited, and they were made to understand, as well as might be, that one day in seven was set aside for rest and relaxation. This they seemed to comprehend, but were, nevertheless, greatly astonished. The thermometer was

restored to-day by the wife of the reputed thief, who thereupon received from our witty tars the cognomen of "Thermometer Jack." During the night the wind increased to a gale, which, however, did not deter the natives from their accustomed visit. They brought accounts that the upper harbour was freezing over. In the afternoon the wind and sea became so boisterous, that our visitors were unable to return to shore; their boats were hoisted up, and preparations made for their accommodation during the night.

It was of course necessary to provide them with food; and as they did not like our usual diet, culinary invention was brought to bear upon the subject most successfully. We had on board a large pitch-kettle which fortunately had not yet been in use; in this were boiled together oatmeal, biscuit, and fat, which latter the episode of the tallow candle convinced us would be appreciated. The mixture was distributed to groups and individuals in all the vessels we could muster, and was devoured with manifest appreciation, the diligence of the partakers only lessening upon an approach to satiety. Immediately upon the conclusion of the meal pipes were universally produced and filled, fire struck with flint and steel, and a smoke taken by each, after which the demand for tin-tin-mee-mil (fresh water) became general, which we had great

difficulty in fully satisfying, for each person took such an enormous draught, that ice, which we were now using, could not be melted sufficiently fast. We had so large a number of visitants on board that it would have been inconvenient, as well as imprudent, to have permitted them to remain below during the night, which, moreover, was not necessary to people of such hardy habits ; the greater number enwrapped themselves in the spare sails brought on deck for that purpose, and a few stowed themselves in the hammock-nettings, which were capacious, and protected by cloths of tarpaulin, making a very snug resting-place. Our arms were of course kept in readiness, and the pistols loaded ; but these precautions, with unflinching vigilance on the part of the watch, were all that was considered necessary.

Ere our guests disposed themselves to rest, much bartering was carried on, besides mutual endeavours at amusement : the fiddle, again put in requisition, was a prolific source of delight ; one or two of the strangers evinced some slight practical knowledge of its use, but uniformly produced only a monotonous succession of sounds. Vocal displays of a similar description were also offered ; these were given in a low crooning tone, the compass being generally very limited, though occasional notes showed

an ability for greater range. We were much attracted and amused by their expressions of astonishment at any new wonder. Kah—käh—kah—was the universal ejaculation of surprise; and kēē—kēē—kěk kěk kēē, rapidly uttered, informed us that an unfortunate lady had burnt her fingers with her hot pannikin of food.

I made an essay this night upon the honesty of our friends; a fine young man named Ahmolcen, belonging to a family which pleased me more than any of the rest, sold me his outer-coat of reindeer skin; but fearful that he would feel the loss of his garment during the night, I restored it to him, making signs that it was to be returned on the morrow. Busy next day with my duties I did not heed the approaching departure of my favourites, and am delighted to record that my friend, as I am proud, from after experience, to call him, sought me out and delivered up the borrowed dress with many signs of acknowledgment for the favour. This fixed him in my esteem, nor had I ever afterwards cause to alter my opinion of his probity.

On the 25th, all hope of making further progress this season being abandoned, the ship was moved further up the harbour, opposite to the small village of which we supposed Akoull to be the chief. At night the sky, though cloudy, was curiously illumined, supposed to be caused by the Aurora.

On the 28th, the ship was finally placed in her intended winter's position, and the work of "stripping" commenced. Warping into berth was a severe foretaste of winter's inclemency; the temperature was at $+28^{\circ}$; the water froze on the hawsers as they came in, nor was the boat-work necessary in laying out the anchors more pleasant, as the wind blew freshly, and spray drenched those engaged.

Navigation and seamanship were now to be dispensed with for awhile; we had before us a long and severe winter to be passed in an ice-bound ship, and we prepared accordingly to render our residence as comfortable and little irksome as might be. The sails were "unbent," dried, and stowed away, yards and lesser spars got on deck, leaving only the lower masts standing, the lower rigging being secured around them to be clear of the housing, which shortly enclosed the upper deck. Parties were sent on shore to build a small house and cut turf. Desirous of early and definitely establishing among our new friends a wholesome knowledge of our power, without displaying a hostile or precautionary intention, the pistols were discharged at a mark, and the 12-pounder howitzer, which was mounted on the forecastle, loaded with grape, and fired at a number of seals which lay on the land ice at the head of the harbour.

On the 1st of November, the first visit was made to the native habitations. A party of officers went to Woorcl, the village where Akoull resided; they repaired to his, and then to other huts, and were received with joyful hospitality, being nearly roasted, as with the Tchutski the increase of heat is the increase of honour; on their departure they were presented with reindeer skins and meat, and bade farewell to their hosts with mutual good will. Next day, according to fashionable usage, the return visit was made by a rather numerous party, two of whom were invited into the gun-room and partook of our dinner. They were by no means awkward in their use of the knife and fork, and handled their spoons to perfection—salt food, pickles, pepper, or any other naturally hot •comestible, they rejected with extreme dislike; but sweets of any kind were consumed with an avidity that proved how agreeable such delicacies were to their tastes. A boat-full of natives, whom we had not before seen, came on board to-day: their arrival reduced the monopoly of native productions, and the bartering was “done at a lower figure.” Among them was a young man with light brown hair and fair complexion; he would easily have passed for an European, the flat nose of the tribe being scarcely distinguishable in him. The chief’s (Akoull’s) youngest child, about two years old,

was also brought on board by his mother, and amused us much by his ludicrous appearance and precocious manner. He was completely enveloped in reindeer skins, dressed with the hair on, a large cushion of the same material was placed at the back of his head as a protection and support, and as he was withal exceedingly fat, and had a mouth like a cocked hat, we laughed at every new glimpse of the young monster. Laughing was not however a practice with this imp of saturnine temperament, who despised moreover the usual amusements of children, and scrutinised all objects with an immovable countenance, as if quite accustomed to their contemplation ; yet this child, although eating blubber, meat, or anything else that was offered to him, was not weaned, taking the breast, not only from his mother, but from any other dame who would accommodate him. The other two sons of Akoull were respectively about nineteen and thirteen years old, both very intelligent and lively. The eldest had been for some time married, and was already a father ; his wife was a very nice looking girl : they both played on the fiddle, but their instrument had only two strings made of deer-gut or sinew—I also saw one of silk—and the bow was much shorter and thinner than ours. Several of the young men had a notion of playing,

but I heard only one tune, which in time and other features much resembled a highland coronach. The fingering was good, but bowing execrable, the action being from the shoulder, with which as a centre and stiffened arm and hand as a radius, they made a series of sweeps greater or less as required by the time and string touched : they placed great weight upon the bow, producing hideous screeching notes ; slurring or stops they had evidently no idea of. I have little doubt that their slight knowledge of the violin has been derived from the Russians.

The "housing over" was completed about this time, and we looked cosy enough. From mast to mast, at the height of seventeen feet from the deck, the lower yards and topmasts were secured as a roof-tree ; on these, sloping to the gunwales, the smaller spars were supported at equal distances ; across these again, poles and staves were placed, forming a species of lattice-work, over which a thick covering of felt was stretched, with skylights here and there, and a sallyport on the poop.

Here let me mourn the death of poor Jack. This was a sheep which had long survived his comrades with whom he had been brought on board at Plymouth, and had been reserved for Sir John Franklin in case of falling in with him ; he had now travelled over 20,000 miles with us, and was a general

pet. Jack had learned many tricks, would eat biscuits, almonds, and morsels of tobacco, and drank grog in the most creditable manner, and when in want of food or water would go to the hatchway and bleat loudly for his attendant, often even descending the ladder, which was steep and awkward. Latterly, probably from exposure to cold, and want of suitable food, he had become emaciated and very weak; and, after weathering so many storms and changes with us, was found one morning under the forecastle in a helpless and dying state. A pig which we had on board, subsequently surnamed the Cannibal, had already commenced to devour him, tearing away the skin on the shoulder; of course he was at once put out of his misery.

Akoull, with some other of the natives, attended Divine worship on the Sabbath, and behaved with perfect propriety; they evidently comprehended that it was a religious ceremony of some kind, although ignorant of its object. Our friendly intercourse with these people was now firmly established; a very few days had sufficed to show them that we had no hostile intentions; and they now came and went freely, without the slightest hesitation: although, as we afterwards learned, they were greatly alarmed upon our first appearance, and many had retired with

their reindeer from their dwellings to secrete themselves among the fastnesses of their hills. They had already found out the gradations in rank, and made selection of their favourites, and never visited us without bringing as presents, or for barter, articles of dress or ornament, reindeer, walrus, seal, and even whales' flesh. On the Captain's paying a visit to Woorel, which, as nearest to the ship (at about four miles distance), was at first exclusively visited, a token of kindly consideration was evinced by Akoull, who sent up a reindeer skin as a present to one of the officers who was not of the party.

The house on shore, intended for bread-baking, washing, and other purposes, was a rare proof of what may be performed with slight means by ingenuity and perseverance. Its walls were composed of large stones, dug with great labour from the stony soil, and of gravelly shingle from the beach, where it existed in considerable quantities: the sloping roof was a combination of rafters, turf, tarpaulin, and a sheet of whale-gut, obtained from the natives. Its extent was twenty feet by twelve; and a door and window looked to the southward. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the affair was the fire-place or stove. An iron tar-cask, cylindrical in form, was given to our ingenious blacksmith, who cut two folding-doors in it,

and converted it into an oven ; it was then placed in one corner of the house, from the roof of which the funnel projected, surmounted by an old bottomless iron pot. In front was placed a flag-staff, on which a Union Jack occasionally enlivened the desolation around.

The temperature, which had lately varied from $+17^{\circ}$ to $+23^{\circ}$, rose above the freezing point on the 6th November, and a general thaw (the most disagreeable thing that can happen in severe winter) occurred. Seals and geese were numerous on the land ice ; the latter, none of which we had seen for a long time, being tempted to alight in this mild weather. We endeavoured to kill some, but they were far too wary.

I find in my private note-book, under date 8th November, the following remarks, which I insert as an instance of first impressions of these people, and interesting as a comparison with my views upon a more mature acquaintance :—" Among those who visited us to-day, came 'Thermometer Jack,' emboldened, I suppose, by the civility the rest meet with, as he has not made his appearance since the act which gained him his *soubriquet*. Really we are becoming quite domesticated with these people ; they visit our mess-room, and go from cabin to cabin, eat with us, drink with us, and are exceedingly good friends. Whether

these are the veritable Tchutski (which I am inclined somewhat to doubt), or another race, I cannot pretend to decide ; but certainly their manners are as much unlike those chronicled by geographers as can be. Quiet and peaceful, having no idea of aggression, and doing all they can to make us happy and conduce to our comfort ; exceedingly cleanly also in their persons and food, for although they consume fat and all kinds of (to us) nasty stuff, they do not take it when dirty, and generally cook everything. I am now speaking only from very slight personal experience."

I must also make another short quotation, as its cause made a great impression upon me at the time : "This evening the temperature has again fallen, and a perfect calm ensued ; the harbour is freezing over fast, with the water as smooth as glass : a bright moon and cloudless starlit sky render the scene one of the most perfect for tranquil beauty I can remember ever to have witnessed ; yet here are no trees, no woods, no foliage to enliven the view ;—all is snow-clad ; mountains and rugged hills frowning in their majesty where thrown into deep shade, and assuming with the headlands and slopes strange fantastic shadows, jutting out in bold relief on the silent water. So, after all, there may be other than tropic nights charming."

In high latitudes the clearness of atmosphere in winter generally precedes an increase of cold ; and on the 9th we found the temperature considerably decreased, one of the men having his fingers slightly frost-nipped while scrubbing hammocks. A seal was brought on board to-day, which, although small, yielded about four inches thickness of blubber next the skin.

Our first masquerade occurred on the 17th November, and was, as a novelty, sufficiently amusing. We had managed to make up a band, which, on extraordinary occasions, reached the number of eight ; the instruments for music were fiddles and a flute, while those added to give effect, which they did most noisily, were a gong and small military drum ; and at a later season, a chime of bells made from those supplied to the ship, and a Tuski drum. One of our men who had not always been a sailor, and among other phases of his varied life, had once itinerated with an organ and a tamburine girl, manufactured a tamburine, which he handled in an artistic manner, doing the thumb-roll to perfection ; and also tried his hand at a tin-flute, which made a good Arctic substitute for a piccolo. European and native materials were alike employed for costume, the hybrid appearances creating much mirth. Among the most promi-

ment characters may be noticed Messrs. Jim Crow and Paul Pry, a sweep, a dustman, and a gentleman's valet; and the master of the band in the sergeant's scarlet coat, gold epaulettes, and cocked-hat and feather, with a black face. There were also two ladies, a harlequin, and a Greek gentleman, whose costume was most correct; a huge bear worried the performers, who were forced to make frequent visits to an inimitable Tom-and-Jerry shop, whose rotund host, our worthy cook, was a fit type of Boniface.

In the afternoon of the 18th, the harbour was, after many disruptions, permanently frozen over, and next morning the natives came to the ships over the ice with dogs and sledges; but the crew were not permitted to run about unrestrainedly until another night had made security indisputable; after which foot-ball, leap-frog, and other athletic exercises, were frequently enjoyed. On the 28th, a severe gale from the north-north-west occurred, which unroofed the house on shore, and dragged the stream-anchor, used to secure the covering, and weighing five cwt. and a quarter, fifteen yards. The snow-drift this day must have proved fatal to any parties caught in it, its velocity was estimated at thirty miles an hour, and it completely obscured objects a few yards distant.

November concluded with the visit of a native

missionary, who produced baptismal certificates and was a gentleman of speech-rambling propensities. I fear his spiritual mission was of little benefit to the savage flock, as we afterwards found him sorely wanting in the two great laws of Christianity.

We were now regularly pursuing 'the occupations and amusements of an Arctic winter. A survey of the harbour was commenced, and parties were employed boiling out oil from blubber which was plentifully supplied, fetching water on a large sledge from a spring discovered near the ship—which kept open all the winter—cutting the edges of the ice round the ship to prevent her being forced up, and removing accumulations of snow from the housing and otherwise, as necessary. A school was regularly established for the men, masquerades occurred every week, and on the 4th of December the Royal Asiatic Theatre opened, with the burlesque of “Bombastes Furioso,” when this prologue was delivered—

“ Sure here's the greatest wonder of the Age,
In Tchutski Land an European Stage !!!
Stern Winter's chilling frowns we hold for nought,
And Mirth and Frolic cherish as we ought.
'Mid Frost and Snow to keep King Fun alive,
This evening we an ancient jest revive.
Our efforts weary moments to beguile
Kindly reward with an approving smile.

CHAPTER III.

Tuski not Tehutski.—Tuski, Proper and Alien : their difference.—
Language.—Description.—Resemblance to Chinese.—Conjectures.—
Difficulty of Discrimination.—A Trip.—Sledges.—Dogs.—Huts.—
Furniture.—Utensils.

IN all our doings, whether of industry or relaxation, the natives took an active part, behaving almost uniformly with perfect good nature, and evincing a most obliging disposition towards us. Of course we soon began to understand each other ; but they did not learn English nearly so quickly as many of us acquired their tongue. The officers were from this time until May seldom all on board together, expeditions being constantly afoot to seek tidings of Franklin, and to gain information respecting the country and inhabitants, of whom, having been constantly among them, I had the good fortune to learn much, and will here endeavour to describe their appearance and other characteristics.

I have first to make a remark respecting the correct designation of this people, which I think all-important towards the decision of a long-disputed question, beside

being a remarkable feature in character. Tchouski, Tchukteche, Tchutski, Tchekto, and other similar appellations, I believe to have all arisen from the word Tuski, meaning a confederation or brotherhood, which exists among them, and is endowed with some extraordinary customs, of which one or two are perhaps unique in practice. We sought assiduously for the self-distinguishing name of this people; and it was conjectured, on one occasion, that they called themselves "Nootüsken Callowole," but this was afterwards found to mean simply, "people of a country," or, in fact, "natives;" thus "Gumneen Nootusken," and "Günneen Nootüsken," mean severally "my country," and "your country." The mention of the numerous appellations given to them by strangers, with inquiry as to their correctness, invariably produced a negative reply, with the use of the word Tuski, and a full explanation of its particular meaning, whence they call themselves "Tuski Callowole," or people of the Tuski brotherhood.

Lengthened intercourse and observation led to the opinion, in myself a confirmed one, that we had two distinct races, or at least branches, before us, differing in language, appearance, and many details of dress and occupation, but living close to and holding friendly intercourse with each other. The Reindeer *Tuski*, or,

as I shall call them, Tuski Proper, evidently the original proprietors or occupants of the soil, having their hamlets situate with a regard to pasture for their large herds of tame reindeer, rather than to the conveniences of fishing, which is pursued by them apparently more as an amusement than a necessity, dressing neatly and with taste in the well-cured skins of the deer slaughtered for food, of which the meat is eaten fresh, or smoked, or converted into delicious pemmican; and the fishing, or Alien Tuski, speaking a dialect evidently first corrupted from the Esquimaux, and now further disguised by adoption of many words of the Reindeer tribe. These of necessity have their huts close upon the sea-shore, being dependent upon the produce of the sea, dressing in seal-skins; and with much less care than their neighbours, filthy in their persons, and frequently revolting in their food, eating almost exclusively fish, whale, seal, and walrus; less athletic, and, indeed, to my view, infinitely inferior both in moral and physical condition to their neighbours. The Tuski Proper exchange skins of the reindeer, and a small portion of the meat, for seal-skins, whale, walrus, and seals' flesh, tusks, sinews, &c., all of which are much less valuable than their own commodities. Seal-skins they need for marine employments, as those of the

reindeer are destroyed by salt water; the aliens require deer-skins for hut furniture.

The Tuski Proper are mostly either tall or stunted in their growth, few persons appearing of a middle stature. I estimate the average height of the tall men to be about 5 ft. 10 in., while the more puny would probably not exceed 5 ft. 5 in. This difference does not hold good as regards their build; all are large limbed, broad shouldered, and of a robust full habit, possessing great strength, powers of endurance, activity, and dexterity in their employments. The women do not vary so much in stature, and are tall in proportion to the men; they also are stout and strong, and display a notable performance of their numerous duties.

The cast of skull and countenance are, as far as my very limited knowledge of the subject extends, pure Mongolian; faces broad, round and flat; high cheek-bones; nose broad, flat and almost bridgeless, in many instances so deeply sunken in the fat face, that a ruler would nearly lie across the cheeks without touching it; eyes placed in a slightly oblique position; lips large and heavy, displaying much of the animal; ears small and delicate; hands and feet also very small but rather thick; hair jet black, coarse and straight; whiskers or beard but seldom

existing, and then only in a few straggling hairs which are plucked out with a knife; the whole expression of countenance is almost identical with Chinese—a point which forcibly struck me at first sight. Their limbs are of splendid muscular development; wrists and ancles very fine, but neck generally short and thick; complexions varying from a light olive to a deeper hue, but very dark tints only occasionally seen. The men generally clip the hair on the crown of the head, leaving only a circlet about three inches broad around it; the women let the hair grow with the exception of that on the forehead which is cut and combed down to the eyebrows. The faces of the women are tattooed on the chin in diverging lines; men only make a permanent mark on the face for an act of prowess or success, such as killing a bear, capturing a whale, &c., and possibly also, in war time, for the death of an enemy.

The dress is with the wealthier sort composed almost entirely of deer, fawn and dogskin, beautifully dressed, by the women, with the hair on: the poorer people, who are apparently much dependent on and obedient to a few rich, often substitute shoes and breeches of sealskin. The usual dress consists for the men of an inner shirt or frock of fawn skin, frequently ante-parturital, worn with the hair

inwards, and a huge frock of deer-skin reaching nearly to the knees, the hair being outwards. The breeches are rarely double; they are secured over the hips by a drawing string, and reach to the ankle, going inside the mocassins, which are made of the skin from the legs of reindeer, with soles of seal or walrus hide, and ornamented with variegated pieces let in at the sides with great taste and neatness. Mittens embroidered with deer-hair, an outer and inner cap, and a belt often handsomely ornamented, complete the ordinary costume, to which in bad weather, *i.e.*, during wind and snow, are added the okonch, to keep the snow from their garments, and also a piece of reindeer skin about eight inches square, which, suspended by a string from the neck, closes the opening in front of the frock, and catches any drops which may fall while the wearer is drinking, &c. The dress of the females is materially different; a frock with a wide hood, edged with wolf or dog-skin, is in one piece with wide buskins, reaching only to the knee, where they are met by handsome mocassins or boots; the costume is exceedingly picturesque, and has been adopted with a view equally to convenience and appearance, as will presently be shown.

I will here notice, before going into further details, the few points of difference which I observed between

those whom I consider Proper, and those whom I consider Alien. Many of those domiciled on the sea shore presented a marked contrast of countenance to the "Reindeers;" the forehead was higher and more narrow, the face longer and less broad, the features more distinctly defined, particularly the nose, the tint darker, and I also think the person, although as muscular, by no means so fleshy; but this may have arisen from the difference of food, notwithstanding I am of opinion that their oily diet was, of the two, more conducive to condition. The languages, as I have before remarked, are essentially different,* though now much commingled; and I consider even the delivery and intonation different, the Aliens dealing much more in guttural sounds. Their dress is almost exclusively of seal and dog-skin; only a few of the principal persons wear good reindeer clothes, which would indeed be quickly spoiled by the nature of their occupations. Their huts are neither so large, so clean, nor so well furnished as those of the Tuski Proper, and it seems to me that they are generally pretty well content to accept the inferior and second-hand skins and garments of their wealthy companions.

* This may be seen in Klaproth's "Asia Polyglotta" and "Sprachatlas," for which information and much kind assistance, I am indebted to my friend Dr. R. G. Latham..

I must here remark that the distinctions I have just drawn, as so decidedly existing between the two races, did not, at first view, present themselves in such force, probably because the line of separation is not rigidly followed; but I have nevertheless no doubt of their correctness. I am indeed inclined to believe that greater or less amalgamation occurs. I cannot speak positively as to marriage, but I know that natives of St. Lawrence Island who bear the type of the sea-coast tribes, and have become prisoners by the chances of war or shipwreck, have passed from one owner to another in the capacity of slaves, and, by concubinage, increased the difficulty of discriminating between the races. Nevertheless, a recurrence of reflection upon this subject has convinced me that, as before said, there were two races present here, one indigenous to the continent, if not to the immediate soil, the other, voluntary or accidental immigrants from the adjacent land of America.

I will not, indeed, exclude the view that possibly, at a period of great antiquity, the Esquimaux on the American coast, west of the Mackenzie river, may themselves have emigrated from the Asiatic continent, since there is an evident dissimilitude, in many respects, between them and those to the

eastward of that river ; but such an event, if it occurred at all, must have been at a very early period, and the return was caused probably by the inability to extend their footing on the American shore. I deem it, therefore, the preferable course to treat of the two tribes as one, excepting where peculiar distinctions occur.

I shall make but slight mention of the country, since it is almost vain to seek in this truly desolate region any more than the least fruitful indications of an elsewhere bountiful Nature. The Flora is especially meagre ; mosses and lichens, with a very few stunted twigs of the *Andromeda* class, are all that are to be found. Ranges of hills cross and recross each other with little of variety in their general shape, all betokening a volcanic origin ; and in many, old craters are clearly visible ; but I know, by report, only of one mountain now burning.

One of the first visits, in their own style, paid to the natives, I had the good fortune to share in ; and in describing it, I shall take the opportunity of mentioning many interesting points. Mahkatzan, to whose hut we were to repair, had brought over sledges and dogs for the journey. Mr. Martin and myself had therefore only to make arrangements for our own comfort, and to provide a few trifles for our hosts. The

Tuski travelling sledge—for there are two other kinds—is constructed principally for speed, being exceedingly light, and of an elegant form. Six or nine arches of wood, let into flat runners, support a seat about five feet long and fourteen inches broad, connected at the head with the runners by thin springy curves; a sort of basket is formed at the back of the sledge, and broad strips of whalebone are secured under the wooden runners, which render friction scarcely observable. Braces and uprights further bind the parts together, and all is fastened with whalebone in a manner perfectly neat and secure. A single thong of seal-hide from the under part of the seat serves to attach the dogs, which vary from two to as many as ten; as far as eight they all run abreast, the single traces of their harness radiating from the main thong, to which they are secured by loops of ivory. The dogs are generally small, long-haired, and wiry, with pointed ears and bushy tail; they have many points resembling both the wolf and the fox, the bark especially being a very melancholy whine. A favoured few of the Tuski were possessors of a tall and strong mongrel breed—probably by communication with the Russians—with short hair, and something of the pointer look. One train of dogs we saw resembled the staghound, and were capable of

immense speed and endurance of fatigue ; but the native dogs will outlive cold and hunger, which the foreign breed would early succumb to, the feet of the strangers being especially tender.

We started from the ship on a splendid morning, with the temperature at 20° below zero, nearly calm. I had the honour of conducting the really pretty wife of Mahkatzan, who seated herself astride behind me on the sledge ! while my companion was placed with our worthy host. I was of course desirous of acquitting myself creditably as a Jehu ; but the first essay in dog-driving will scarcely be a successful one. Reins there are none ; the animals are to be guided almost entirely by the whip, particularly with strangers, their masters alone having power by the voice ; and herein great management and watchfulness are necessary, and an unpractised hand will be quite unable to run the dogs off a beaten track, or prevent their returning to their homes. Fortunately for my escape from total discomfiture, Mahkatzan led the way, and our canine steeds were going homeward, so we dashed along without any more than an occasional overturn, my fair companion holding me in a vigorous grasp in any such case of danger ; consequently a double effort of clinging to our sledge was of course necessary on my part. After a rapid drive of

four hours, during which my companion had his face slightly frost-nipped, we arrived at Kaygwan, where our conductor resided, and were scarcely permitted to look round, so eager was he to press upon us the hospitable shelter of his roof. Kaygwan is a very small place ; I cannot even call it a hamlet, since it consisted only, if my memory serve me right, of five huts, of which that of our entertainer, though greatly larger than the others, was not of extraordinary dimensions.

As the huts of the Tuski are all of similar form and materials, and differ only in size, cleanliness and convenience, I shall here describe them generally, noting peculiarities in their proper places. Around, and resting upon one or two props, are ranged at equal distances ribs of the whale, their number and the area of the hut or tent, which is mostly circular or oblong spheroidal in shape, depending upon the dimensions. Over these, tightly stretched and neatly sewn, is drawn a covering of walrus skin, so beautifully cured and prepared as to retain its elasticity, and to be semiluculent ; some of these skins are of an enormous size ; I saw one in the roof of Metra's tent at Wootair, which could not have contained less than between seventy and eighty square feet, and the whole clear as parchment. So much light being

admitted by the roof, no windows are necessary; an aperture on the most sheltered side serves as a door, over which, when not in use, a screen of walrus skin is drawn; snow is heaped to the height of about eighteen inches round the tent, to keep wind or drift from penetrating beneath, and the outer shell is complete, with the addition of cords of hide sometimes passed over and across the roof to secure the skin.

The yaranga (plural of yarang), as these huts are called, are constructed of a rounded form, to prevent snowdrift from collecting at the gables, and to oppose few points to the fierce winds which sweep remorselessly over these treeless regions; the same rule is not observed with regard to the interior. As the yaranga vary so much in size, some being only ten or a dozen feet in diameter, while the largest measure from thirty to forty, the internal arrangements also differ much. In the smaller, a single apartment—frequently scarce large enough for two persons—runs across the hut opposite to the door, while in the habitations of chiefs, who have generally three or four generations living under their roofs, the sleeping places extend in a front and two sides nearly round the walls of the dwelling. These extraordinary chambers are formed by posts let into the soil at a distance from

each other, and from six to eight feet from the exterior walls, on which, at heights varying from three to five feet, a roof of skins and laths is supported; thick layers of dried grass are placed over all to exclude the cold; deerskins dressed with the hair on and closely sewn together hang from the edge of this roof on the inside, and can be drawn aside or closed at will; when shut they entirely exclude the external air. On the ground are stretched more well-cured walrus' skins, over which, when repose is taken, those of the reindeer and Siberian sheep, beautifully prepared, are laid; above, close under the roof, against the sides of the hut, small lattice shelves are slung, on which mocassins, fur socks, and the dried grass which the more prudent place in the soles of their boots to absorb moisture, are put to dry. A species of dish, oval and shallow, manufactured, as I understood, by themselves, of a plastic material and afterwards hardened, but from its appearance possibly cut out of stone, serves as a lamp; against a ridge, running along the middle, and nearly an inch high, fibres of weet-o-weet, or moss, are neatly arranged, only their points showing above the stone edge: the dish is filled with train oil, often hard frozen, and a light of peculiar beauty produced, giving enormous heat, without, when well trimmed,

either smoke or smell, and certainly one of the softest lights I ever saw, not the slightest glare distressing the eyes; around the outer wall are ranged any trifling articles of ornament which may be possessed. Wooden vessels scooped from drift-wood are placed in the corners; they contain ice and snow, of which the Tuski consume vast quantities; indeed, snow-munching appears to occupy the principal part of their time between the important periods of food and repose. The area of the yarang not occupied by the salons is used quite as an antechamber or hall of entrance; here food is deposited previous to preparation for cooking, much of which is also done here over larger lamps than those inside. Here are unloaded sledges, and the porters of ice and snow; the former being afterwards placed on the roof of the sleeping apartment. Here too the dogs feed and sleep, the faithful creatures ever seeking to lie close to their masters at the edge of the inner rooms, and even thrusting their noses into the heated atmosphere. Now let us go into the air again, and then, with my host Mahkatzan, enter his habitation, and note its novel features.

CHAPTER IV.

Kaygwan.—A Tuski House.—Rather too warm.—A Relief.—A Delusion.—
Magic and Music!!—Snow Storm.—Two good Friends.—Port Emma.
—Intimacy with Natives.—Tök.—Tuski Skill and Ingenuity.—The
would-be Priest.—Constitution of Rank.—A clever Fellow.

KAYGWAN had been doubtless chosen as a residence for its convenience as a fishing station; in all else it was decidedly undesirable, being placed upon the brow of a slight eminence overlooking the sea, and but little sheltered by the hills south and west of it. Before Malikatzan's hut, as frequently in other places, stood a slight scaffolding, upon which were placed sledges, harness, frozen fish, and other matters, which it was necessary to keep from the dogs. Against and upon the hut were poles and coils of line of walrus or seal hide, seal and walrus-skins but lately removed from the animals, all thrown carelessly up; while in the outer hall of the yarang, scraps and fragments of fish and blubber, scattered straws and lines of snow-drift, gave but small promise of neat or cleanly arrangements. Lifting the heavy

skins which hung before the inner chamber, Mahkatzan ushered us in with officious zeal ; here we found, besides his wife, who had already slipped off the upper part of her dress, a number of girls and boys, some quite naked, others only partly so. The heat was painfully oppressive after the pure cold atmosphere outside ; but this did not at all distress our host, who deliberately divested himself of his garments, which were however disposed about his person with perfect propriety. The heat reaching at last 100° Fahrenheit, we were glad to follow his example, in part, removing our heavy outer habiliments, and resigning ourselves to the now more tolerable infliction, in shirt and trousers.

The unaccustomed scene in all its variety had so powerful an effect upon us that we were unable to do more than look at the viands offered for our acceptance ; indeed, on entering the hut, appetite had been quite banished by the sight of a walrus which, although now frozen, was evidently far gone in putrefaction.

We were glad to get a cup of tea, of which we had brought a small stock, and hoped soon to forget all our troubles in repose. Fallacious idea ! deluded victims ! Every instant from that of our entrance, the screens were in constant agitation, the

denizens of the hamlet, who I verily believe were magically multiplied that night for our torment, thrusting in their wondering visages to get sight of the "Atwoken Callowole," or "Big boats' people." These manifestations of wonder were to be tolerated, as they really did friendly service, letting in some of the delicious cold air which was otherwise denied us ; but alas, an ordeal we had little reckoned on was yet to come, dread Shamanism in all its terrors. Just when we eagerly anticipated the signal for repose, the tent was invaded by a host of both sexes, among whom two men of a villainous aspect (to us at that moment particularly so), carried large drums or tambourines ; and a nocturnal serenade immediately commenced, which for screeching and deafening uproar equalled music of the Infernos. The performances were commenced by the two drum-beating Shamans, who sang monotonously while tapping in a slow measured time ; and these were soon joined by the whole body in chorus, with violent shouts and gesticulations, increasing in rapidity and vehemence. This sort of thing continued for nearly half an hour, by which time Martin and I were almost bewildered, and victims of racking headaches. After these rather forcible demonstrations of rejoicing, for such our host interpreted them to be, we were still further entertained

by gymnastic evolutions or contortions of various performers, who at the same time chaunted, accompanied by the drums and chorus. The first were young girls, then young men, and lastly, as if to wind up and provoke our mirth at any rate, an aged woman with shrivelled limbs, and hideous puckered visage, essayed a feeble exhibition, crooning out also in a thin and shaking tone, and concluding her deed of might with a grin of horror. It was so inexpressibly ludicrous, that notwithstanding great disgust and pity for the poor old creature, our uncontrollable emotions were not to be suppressed, and we laughed loudly and long, at which the dame seemed greatly flattered, and cackled to herself in high glee.

The Tuski drum is composed of the peritoneum or external membrane of the stomach of the deer, seal, or walrus, stretched across a slight hollow frame of an oblong round, with a short handle to keep clear of the skin. This membrane is not generally beaten; a light wand of drift fir is held by the middle and struck against the edges of the wooden frame, sound being produced by concussion: sometimes two very light rods of whalebone with small knobs are used; these are gently tapped on the skin itself, and the sound then is more shrill. The evolutions practised to-night brought only the upper part of the performers' body

into play, their legs being folded under them ; there was little worthy of note except the precision with which music and movements accompanied each other.

There is a termination to all human events ; we were at last released from this inhuman persecution, performers and gazers departed, and our, literally, shake-downs were prepared. Mahkatzan and his wife hung a curtain of skins from the roof of the apartment, laid down others for couches and coverlets ; then, pointing out to us the places we were to occupy, extinguished the lamp and all lay down to sleep ; nor were we disturbed until grey dawn appeared, and with it a heavy gale and terrible snow-drift, which threatened at first to prevent our return to the ship, Mahkatzan refusing to guide us thither. On our evincing, however, a determination to depart, even if alone, he reluctantly harnessed the dogs and set forth with us.

Those who have never witnessed a heavy snow-storm can have but slight idea of the difficulty of travelling in it, especially over a barren country where there is little shelter, and no check to the furious rush of drift. Martin and I were choking and blinded before we had gone half-a-dozen yards, and began to think our guide was right in his objections ; however we persisted in trying it yet awhile, and when we had gone some distance, though the weather became

worse, thought it better to proceed than turn back. Many tracts and lakes, which when we came over had been hidden by snow, now lay perfectly bare, only a few hardened ridges here and there near stones showing the resistance offered. On the lakes, which were frozen smoothly as glass, friction was so entirely lost that sledges, dogs, and men, were carried along by the wind without the slightest power of control; contact with hardened waves of snow or fragments of rough ice on the borders alone stopped us, the sledges then overturning and throwing us off with violence. We took just double the time to make the return journey that we had before occupied, and arrived at the ship well nigh frozen and greatly fatigued.

The covering to protect the dress, as well as the square piece worn over the opening in the frock, proved on this occasion their great value. The okonch, okoncho, or oköncé, is made of the intestines of whales, and other marine animals, slit open and sewn very neatly together on a double edge; those of the men have a narrow hood and sleeves, and are generally plain, of whale gut: the women have them mostly of seal gut, which is much thinner and less oily: these have broad hoods to receive their hair and the large fringed hoods of their frocks; the sleeves also

are very wide : some are ornamented with feathers from the bill of the eider duck placed apart in rows ; others have thin strips of seal skin and hair edging the sleeves and bottom, and indeed there are various modes of ornament : the strips are sewn together horizontally or vertically at the caprice of the maker. This species of shirt is when good quite impervious to water and exceedingly light, weighing only a few ounces : it is manifest what a boon such a protection must be in snow, particularly heavy drift, the fine particles of which will penetrate into the smallest crevice, and so completely fill the hair of the dress that its weight becomes unbearable. The little square patch is also a trusty friend ; when clogged it is easily taken off, beaten, and replaced.

Frequent visits were now made to the neighbouring hamlets, those immediately proximate to our position being of course most often repaired to. Of these, Woorcl, the nearest, was about four miles, nearly south, from the ship, in a small bay of the harbour which had been christened Port Emma by Captain Moore ; it contained ten or eleven huts, and about seventy inhabitants.

Highly interesting as our communication with this new people naturally was, it must not be supposed that we depended entirely upon them for means of

occupation or amusement: nevertheless they were in most cases so intermingled with our employments that these acquired a new zest thereby. Naturally of an inquisitive, curious disposition, increased doubtless by the profusion of unexplained and novel wonders each day exhibited, our friends beset us ever on all sides with countless questions, whether we were engaged in making scientific observations, reading a book, or mixing a glass of grog as an interlude. All was new; all must be made clear and common-place to their comprehension. Then there were little transactions of "tòk," or barter, to be gone into; but herein I certainly believe that our friends were more *au fait* than ourselves: they speedily caught at the tastes of each of us and met our desires, often before expressed, almost by intuition. But it must not be imagined that these efforts were made without hope of fee or reward, although some instances of pure disinterestedness, I believe, I can venture by and by to record. On the side of the natives were produced frocks and breeches of reindeer, fawn, seal and dog-skin, also of eider duck, okonches or over shirts for snow, caps, mocassins, mitts and such like, in all of which the inventive genius of the untutored savage was employed; and so extensive was the demand for their productions, that great

improvement became speedily manifested, and even new branches for profit opened.

These people embroider very prettily, and to a great extent, with the hair of the reindeer and pieces of leather cut out in the required form and sewn on; they also join many party-coloured pieces of skin together, which have frequently a very pretty effect. It is curious to notice how with them, as in more civilised communities, certain persons were famed for their skill in particular branches of manufacture. Some women were remarkable for dressing skins in a superior manner; others were noted for employing better dyes than usual. At Wootair dwelt a cunning artist, a very Tuski Cellini, whose skill in sculpturing ivory was the theme of praise throughout the country. One man made whip handles well; another produced the best thongs, and so in all things we saw; as I believe must inevitably be; *chaqu'un a son métier*. These enjoy a monopoly in their peculiar pursuits; and although, I believe, they do not exact more than an equitable consideration for their productions among themselves, put the screw on pretty tightly with strangers, whom a fortunate chance had thrown upon their shores; and as, of course, curiosities and specimens of the progress of the arts and sciences were in great request, a fine

harvest was reaped by the more ingenious. In addition to the articles of clothing, before spoken of, as brought for barter, many really interesting nick-nacks were produced. Models of sledges, and of household furniture, pipes and toys of ivory, among which were ducks, seals, dogs, &c., made for their children, and evidencing great taste and variety, fishing-lines of whalebone, with hooks and sinkers of ivory, seal-skin bags, large and small, coils of rope of walrus or seal hide, cut without a join for full fifty fathoms, and of all thicknesses; dogs, sledges and harness; and, in fact, any and everything they could think of within their resources; even the tiniest children endeavouring to bring something into the market: indeed, their contributions were not the least interesting or sought for. Reindeer, or portions of a carcase, were occasionally brought for sale or gift, also blubber of the whale and seal for oil, and walrus flesh for the dogs, of which we had in course of time a large number for the sledges. Walrus tusks also brought a good price, and were at first supplied in profusion.

The exchanges on our side consisted of large and small knives, beads, files, saws, tobacco, trade-cloth, needles, thinbles, looking-glasses, and any little odds and ends which we happened to possess. - Preserved

meat tins were a great acquisition to the meagre furniture of the Tuski, who were delighted to replace their scanty and cumbrous wooden vessels, scooped with great pains out of drift wood, or others made of thin pieces, bent and hooped, which, although lighter, leaked perpetually, by the canisters, which they scraped bright, and put neat handles to. Indeed, there was great ingenuity displayed in the application of everything transferred from us to them, nor was the smallest scrap refused; a tiny bit of wood was accepted with the same alacrity as would be shown upon the offer of a knife or a necklace; and although we might not be able to conceive the use it would be put to, some future occasion would display its application.

I have before spoken of a self-called, and I rather think, self-constituted missionary, who visited the ship in November; we were favoured by his presence on more than one occasion subsequently; and when we came to understand him better, were informed, I believe with much exaggeration, that he had been regularly ordained at Kolyma by the Greek priests, and commissioned to convey Gospel tidings to his countrymen. His code of ethics was, however, greatly at variance with that of our great Master. He communicated his intention of proceeding shortly

on a journey to some place which was evidently Russian ; and by the time to be occupied in the voyage (two months), and direction pointed out, I have little doubt that the Fort on the Anadyr was indicated. With a view to sending intelligence of our whereabouts to England, a despatch was prepared for the secretary of the Admiralty, with a request, in French and German, to any one who might receive it, to have it forwarded without delay.

Our friends soon became accustomed to masquerades, football, and other games, and took a lively part in all ; but plays were a little more mysterious ; and when, on the 15th of December, the farce of "The Way to Settle Accounts with your Laundress" was enacted, the reversed dunimy, in the water-butt, imaginary victim of suicide, was considered to be an acme of conjuring, and is, I believe, an unexplained wonder to this day.

It was long before we were at all able to obtain anything like a definite idea of the nature of their social ladder ; there were evidently some of our friends who were treated with superior consideration, and who, when they visited us, always came attended by a following, but they seldom attempted anything like dictation to their suite. I am even now by no means sure as to the actual conditions of rank ; but

am disposed to consider them as threefold,—principally patriarchal, partly hereditary, and partly priestly. There is, at the same time, no doubt that only certain individuals were recognised as of a higher condition, and these were much disposed to deny—at any rate, to us—the pretensions of their fellows, while they enlarged upon their own ; and in this, those who by serfdom or inclination owned their individual importance, supported their statements.

Of all whose position it gave us the greatest trouble to determine, Akoull was certainly pre-eminent; and it must be confessed that as a diplomatist he far outstripped his comrades. Undoubtedly he was a very clever fellow. I believe that even upon his first visit to the ship, while we were yet in the bay, his line of conduct was decided upon. With the comprehensive glance and intuitive appreciation of a politician, he instantly divined, from the nature of our society, the deference paid to our chiefs, and the desire displayed to discover the leaders of his own party, the great benefit which must accrue to the seeming or actual possession of rank ; and so with equal assurance and astuteness he at once placed himself foremost among them ; and, although subsequent circumstances led us to doubt the correctness of his presumptions, he had so adroitly succeeded

in rendering himself of service to us, and really by his cunning exerted such great influence over his companions, that we on all occasions treated him with the consideration due to rank. I believe, indeed, that his fortunes had formerly been more prosperous than now; and that this, with the profession of Shamanism, which he undoubtedly practised, caused him to be of some eminence in his tribe. His son was married to the daughter of Metra, who was certainly the wealthiest, and, but for his very quiet disposition, would have been the almost undisputed chief of the Tuski Proper in our immediate vicinity.

CHAPTER V.

Welcome little Stranger.—A merry Christmas.—A Christening.—A Visit from the Aristocracy.—An ancient, Teo.—A canny lad, Enoch.—Miss Propriety, Meeco.—Mi-yo, la Petite.—The Diplomat, Akoull.—Bel-conta the Clever.—A Child of Fortune, Metra the Slow.—Reindeer, a Tableau.—A Patriarch, Mooldoyah.—Yancengah the Good.—The Friend, Ahmoleen.—The Pet, Ka-oong-ah.—A queer fellow, Om-dooyah.—Attah the Knowing.

ON the 20th December the first birth since our arrival occurred; and on this account, and also because the little stranger was granddaughter to both Metra and Akoull, its advent was celebrated by a salute of twenty-one guns, and an extra masquerade in the evening.

Christmas-day was observed with due form and merriment. Our crew dined all together upon deck, and the fare would have done no discredit to a more genial clime and productive situation. A reindeer roasted whole graced the centre of the board in a dish made for the occasion; while the carcase of "Poor Jack," the sheep, at one end, was faced by goodly rounds of spiced beef at the other. Numerous

entremets of preserved meats, with a plentiful supply of vegetables and pickles, completed the first course, which was followed by enormous puddings of plum,—such as an Englishman's soul loveth,—and tarts of cranberries, and other preserved fruits. An unlimited supply of the sailor's beverage assisted the consumption of the edibles; and our boys enjoyed a glorious repast, assisted by a select few of their Tuski friends, especially invited on the occasion. The hilarity was great and undisturbed; and good feeling reached such a pitch ere midnight, that the officers were successively carried round the ship with cheers and shouts of rejoicing, which proceeding seemed to astonish our native friends amazingly.

Next night a Christmas pantomime, composed on board, was performed in a manner highly creditable to all concerned in its preparation, and brought down thunders of applause from pit and boxes.

On the 28th, Captain Moore, with two or three of our number, went down to Woorel to christen the child of Belconta, born on the 20th instant. Rockets were sent up in celebration of the event; and we were highly diverted to see a native run after one of these, which, misplaced in firing, darted along the ground instead of mounting aloft. Fortunately for him, he did not succeed in catching it.

As amusements were at this time the order of the day, a greasy pole was erected upon the ice, surmounted by a bottle of rum—a challenge to all comers—and fine fun it created; nor was it until late in the day that one of our men bore off the prize in triumph. We ended 1848 by ringing out his venerable majesty, and ushered in the infant heir with a joyous peal.

One or two excursions had been undertaken during December; but it was not till 1849 had commenced that they assumed a place in our regular pursuits. It took some time to establish ourselves firmly with our new friends, and to enable us to feel quite secure among them when removed from the protection of our ship and her resources. Hitherto, also, our imperfect acquaintance with the language formed an impediment; but now that the way to a more extended and less guarded intercourse was opened, many very interesting trips were made. The ones I was myself engaged upon I shall mention in their order; and these cover, with little intermission, the period from January until May.

On the 8th of January, whether by accident or design, I cannot say, we were invaded by an influx of distinguished visitors. The first who arrived was the Chief of Oongwysac, Teo, his daughters Meeco and

Mi-yo, and his two sons. Teo had already seen many summers, and was infirm; he was, moreover, quite lame, having received a disabling wound in bygone years from Mooldooyah, who in some quarrel had bitten him desperately in the leg, and crippled him for life. Teo was deaf and taciturn, and, when he spoke, articulated with hesitation and difficulty, being apparently afflicted with palsy or paralysis. He was, notwithstanding, a very pleasant and well-disposed old gentleman; a little crusty at times, perhaps, but very well in all. He brought some handsome presents for the captain—among others, a sealskin tanned and bleached perfectly white, ornamented all over in painting and staining with figures of men, boats, animals, and delineations of whale fishing, &c.,—a valuable curiosity.

Enoch, his son, was in many respects a type of his father; but qualities which in the elder might pass for wisdom and deliberation were in the son but apparent indications of a sordid nature; and such I believe was the case. No athletic exercises for Enoch, no employments and amusements, such as the young men of his own age practised,—these were rarely his occupations. Rather would he sit the livelong day in his compartment of his father's yarang, fingering and fussing over his queer little two-stringed fiddle, or

some other equally quaint article ; or with knife of tiny size and crooked blade, scoop out some toy or model from fragment of wood or ivory, to be disposed of to the Atwoits Callowole upon the first opportunity and most favourable terms ; for Enoch was no spendthrift fool to dissipate in fruitless gifts the results of his industry and ingenuity, both of which he possessed in plenty. Enoch was small, and neither so well shaped nor so vigorous as his countrymen generally ; indeed, if I recollect right, he had in youth received a spinal injury, from which he still suffered ; his face bore the sallow tinge of delicate health, and his hair, which he wore long, was of a lighter hue than was generally seen. It would not indeed be unreasonable to conjecture him to be of mixed descent. In all his communications with us, and they were frequent, Enoch's manner was subdued and obliging : he evidently avoided jars or breaches of good feeling, alike with us and his own companions.

Teo's eldest daughter, Meeco, was a strapping lass, who conducted all arrangements with perfect self-possession and good-humour, and attended to her decrepit father with exemplary attention. Neither her features, mien, nor manners, with some slight exception, would have disgraced a more civilised

region. We afterwards saw much of her ; and whether abroad or installed as mistress of her father's large yarang, which she managed without control or interference, Meeco was Propriety's self.

Mi-yo, the second daughter, was much younger and smaller than her sister ; a quiet, pretty little girl, who said little and smiled much. Both the sisters pleased us much by their looks of superior cleanliness. Akoull and Belconta soon arrived. It was evidently part of the former's arrangement that we should never be permitted to communicate with strangers or men of influence without his presence and assistance, if possible ; or, at any rate, his immediate cognisance of the event by means of one of his many spies : assuredly friend Akoull had a keen understanding, and a ready fund of assurance which stood him in good stead on many ominous occasions, and would have conducted him to wealth and distinction in other lands where they are sharpened by competition, and more speedily appreciated than among these people of simple mind. Akoull was a just embodiment of his moral qualities, small, shrivelled, and yellow, yet of nervous and active development and habits ; of speech low-toned, fluent, and insinuating ; with small quick eyes, sparkling and restless, stealthy step and deferential address, he looked himself—

a wily, calculating schemer. His son, Belconta, was one of the most intelligent among the tribe, and if he possessed like cunning to his father's, took care to conceal it; he excelled in those exercises which call for efforts of mental power, being, for instance, a skilful charioteer and unrivalled trainer of dogs; he displayed a greater capability than the rest for acquiring information, and speedily learned many of our words and even sentences: he was a particular favourite with some, and upon the whole was generally liked by our party; nor was he ever included in the suspicions of double dealing which were more than once raised against his parent.

Belconta was of small stature, light and well-proportioned, with cleanly-cut features, good expression, and clear complexion; his general aspect was prepossessing, and this was certainly required in the family as a set-off against that of his father, which was decidedly sinister. He played the fiddle, was a constant visitor at the ship, and took an animated part in our diversions, ever showing a disposition to oblige.

On the return of Messrs. Martin and Simpson from Wootair, whither they had been on a visit, they were accompanied by Metra, of whom I have already spoken, and some of his family. Metra will figure

much in my narrative, and was a person of great wealth and importance ; but I fear that in attempting to present his picture it will be difficult to delineate any remarkable points ; he was, in fact, a very uninteresting individual, and but for his position must have remained unnoticed among the common herd. How often do adventitious circumstances render men, possessing in themselves no points of prominence, objects of importance and celebrity. Metra was no longer young ; his hair had already begun to silver, and a few crows'-feet marked the progress of time, but he had doubtless worn well, being oppressed probably by few cares, and promised to enjoy a green old age ; his form had lost little of its roundness and muscular development, and he could show, when he pleased—which was, however, seldom—well-nigh as great activity as the youngsters, but his ordinary movements were rather snail-like and he was evidently not accustomed either to hurry or to put himself at all out of the way for any one ; indeed, I should say, if such a thing ever occurs among the Tuski, that Metra had been a petted child for whom all services were performed by obsequious attendants, the natural indolence of his character alone preserving it from material deterioration. Like Teo, Metra was not a man of many words ; he had a great partiality

for the Russian word *Toroma*, meaning, I believe, welcome, and this he brought in on all occasions, not always suitably, but it was of little consequence; he had not, I venture to conclude, many ideas in play at one period, and as they circulated but slowly in the caverns of his brain, *Toroma* came in, I fancy, very conveniently as a stop-gap to conversation while he had time to replace one thought by the next; occasionally, however, *Metra* displayed latent powers of mind scarcely to be expected; dry, quaint, and often even caustic humour, showed that there was still something better than dross beneath the surface; and as he was a very shrewd old gentleman at a bargain, I do not think we ought to dismiss him from our sketch as altogether a simpleton, but rather afford him the designation of *slow*.

All these visitors had arrived in their sledges, drawn by dogs, of which *Metra* and *Belconta* possessed the finest teams in the country; but a new and delightful spectacle was afforded us later in the afternoon, by the arrival of *Mooldooyah*, his wife, son, and friend, each driving two reindeer harnessed to his sledge. I cannot describe the emotions we experienced at this sight, so novel and so interesting; no other incident, since the first view of the natives in their atwoits in the bay, produced so vivid a remembrance of the distance



which lay between us and our homes, and of the strange people we were now among.

In our first interview with the Tuski, after the immediate surprise and novelty had passed, we were too much employed with our own affairs to pay particular attention to each peculiarity upon its primary exhibition, and thus many points of striking interest had become familiar, while we neglected to notice them with due attention. But this incident recalled all the strangeness of our position to mind; one view of the tableau presented renewed the freshness and interest of this phase of our lives. Lofty rugged mountains; majestic and snow-bewrapped, surrounded the ice-bound harbour, now clad in a smooth, almost unbroken mantle of dazzling white; the Atwoit resting upon its bosom like a bird upon the water, now long located in her icy home, and with snow upon the roof and masts, and a ridge of broken ice around her, added to the strangeness of the scene; while the crew, clad in all varieties of costume, from the semi-military to a close proximity with the dresses of our friends, mingling with the Tuski in their curious habiliments, now also beginning to evidence their intercourse with us by scraps of European manufacture, intermixed with their own dresses—nearly a hundred dogs, with

numerous sledges—and, to crown all, the new arrivals, with their reindeer, filled up the picture which needed nothing more to complete its picturesque and peculiar beauty. These beautiful animals, attached only by light traces to the sledges, and with long reins of carefully dressed and rounded hide, fastened to their horns, their long loose coats smooth and glossy—for the 'Tuski pay great attention to their tame draught animals—branching antlers, soft, lustrous eyes, pendant dewlaps, and slender springing fetlocks, looked models of docility, endurance, and speed.

Mooldooyah, paterfamilias and leader of the party, was a man of enormous mould and striking appearance. By far the largest of his tribe, he stood considerably above six feet in height, with limbs and figure of massive development, increased by an inclination to obesity, which his mature years had begun to display. His face, now large, round, and heavy, had, I should imagine, once been handsome, being redeemed from the ordinary flat form of his fellows by a straight strong nose and well-marked brows; his forehead was broad and low; mouth and chin heavy and sensual. Like the majority of gigantic men, Mooldooyah's temperament was of a phlegmatic turn, and this was a fortunate condition of his existence; for, when roused, which rarely

occurred, Mooldooyah was terrible in his anger. Ordinarily he was stolid, inactive, and good-tempered, took all things with exemplary patience, let every one, particularly his wife, of whom he was justly very fond, do as they pleased, and showed a great dislike to standing; added to this, he eat and drank in proportion to his vast bulk, and smoked as often as he could afford it, which, after I knew him, was very nearly all day long.

Yancenga, the wife of Mooldooyah, was, in my estimation, without an equal of her sex in the tribe, when all points of comparison were considered; true, Mi-yo, the charming *petite* sister of Mecco, the amiable wife of Yappo, and the fair *danu* of Mahkatzan, might each dispute with her the palm of beauty; but these were still quite young, while Yancenga's charms had merged into the fuller figure of the matron: but who, like Yancenga, bore so unvaried a countenance of good-humour?—who, like her, was always amiable, always thoughtful for the wants or comforts of those around her? Of the tallest among her sex, large and robust, yet of rounded and well-formed figure, with an easy, dignified carriage, which was never ungraceful, a countenance originally very handsome, though now full and slightly coarse, eyes of liquid jet, ever sparkling and beaming with good

humour, features generally good, but whose effect was much injured by the lips, which, enclosing large strong regular teeth of pearly whiteness, were too full and heavy for a delicate taste, neat and well-made garments put on with judgment, small feet and hands, and an open engaging manner, marked my friend Yaneenga as one of the best and worthiest specimens of her tribe. I shall have much more to say of her and her husband presently, so will now pass to their son, Ah-mo-leen, of whom I recorded a trait honourable to his character, on the occasion of purchasing his coat at an early stage of our acquaintance.

Ahmoleen, now the eldest son, was only inferior to his father in stature and size, and being much younger was less unwieldy in figure; in other respects he greatly resembled Mooldooyah, was a little more lively, and of course much more active; but his good temper and forbearing disposition were equally conspicuous, nor did he ever take undue advantage of his great superiority of physical strength. I believe, notwithstanding his inactivity, that Mooldooyah was even now much more powerful than his son; but next to him Ahmoleen was chief in size and strength. Mooldooyah often lamented to me, in moving terms, the death of an elder son, who so greatly surpassed Ahmoleen in physical development, that, as he

expressed it to me, he could have taken Ahmoleen by the middle and dashed him down upon the earth.

Ka-oong-ah, the little daughter of Yaneenga, almost the realisation of one's idea of what she herself must have been as a child, concludes my present detail of this party; she was lithe of limb, prattling, rosy, and merry as a bird, a most ingenious little sempstress, and delighted to make all sorts of queer little bags and gloves and dolls for me, whose especial favourite she was, and whom it was her delight to plague.

In addition to these personages we were favoured by the presence of Mahkatzan, black, oily, and grasping; Omdooyah, and his wife, Attah. Now, Omdooyah, although not a chief, was such a very queer fellow, that I cannot refrain from noticing some of his peculiarities; and Attah was so unceasing and troublesome, but at the same time so very useful a visitor, that she likewise deserves a moment's attention. Omdooyah was an original of the first water, and a very funny one to boot. First as to *personnel*: he was unlike everybody else; his frame was large and somewhat heavy, and in this he slightly resembled our friend Mooldooyah, but here all comparison ended. His frame was broad and square, but loose and ungainly, with limbs which constantly disputed their mutual affinity, and ever played at hide and

seek with each other ; a demeanour generally impassible, but upon the successful conclusion of his frequent jokes lighting up in an inexpressibly ludicrous manner ; a face round and flat as the full moon, with a dab for a nose, and a gash for a mouth, around which, and the saucer-like eyes inclining at an angle to the nose, sly mirth and mischief-loving wrinkles lay crowding together : Omdooyah was absolutely overflowing with fun ; everything served him for a joke, enjoyment of which was heightened by the quiet yet irresistibly droll way in which it was perpetrated, and a sort of half-unconscious, half-quizzing expression which used to excite us to screams of laughter. No matter whether for or against himself, the fun must be had, and he must do it. The quintessence of good nature too, was Omdooyah, the personification of good will to his fellows. We often, to our shame be it recorded, tried to put him into a passion by some practical joke, for we loved fun as well in that snowy clime as in more genial regions ; but it was of no avail ; the only result was a grin which made his mouth look like the Tower moat, and a sly return of the jest presently. I dare say he thought it was too much trouble to get in a rage ; besides there was no fun in that, so it was too dull work. Omdooyah was one of our especial favourites, and this entirely from his own

amiability; he had unrestrained ingress to the ship, to our mess, and to our cabins, and was never a burden because he had withal such innate good sense, I may even say delicacy of perception, that we were never under fear of his intrusion when preoccupied, nor of interference in our communications with others; if he found or thought himself *de trop*, he would either quietly seek some other locality, or seat himself, like a half-pay lieutenant in the waiting-room at the Admiralty, to await the leisure of those he sought, studying the objects around, which were already as familiar to him as the furniture of the aforesaid waiting-room is to myself, with a degree of interest and attention only justified by his want of occupation.

Now for his worthy spouse. Attah was what is very generally called "exceedingly plain," which means, I suppose, plainly ugly; any juvenile charms, any dimpled beauties which might have graced her visage in more favourable seasons, had fled for ever: wrinkles and puckers held despotic sway there, now rendered less inviting by long accumulations of dirt, for Attah was regardless of the greatest of human comforts, and was ever in a sad condition of untidiness and filth. Attah's own definition of herself would probably have led one to imagine that her disposition was of the most obliging nature, that her

sole delight was to be useful to those around her ; and so indeed it might appear to a casual observer. But I must be less charitable and more just to her character, having had irrefragable proofs of a totally different leaning. Think not it was the performance of a service which delighted the dame ; true, she was ever ready, ever officiously volunteering to be of use, but far other was the aim of her readiness, of her activity, than the promptings of a benevolent nature ; alas ! we must admit with regret that the chief object of Attah, in all her doings, was the remuneration which should follow their completion. Yes, for “ tok,” which, though strictly meaning barter, is also used for payment or gift, she would do anything. Being always at hand, very quick in her motions, having ever a smiling face, and chattering away in great style, she was at first considered a kind, willing creature, whom it was a pleasure to employ and reward ; but she presumed upon the favour shown her, displayed jealousy and sulks when other ladies were engaged to perform any slight service with the needle, and became, moreover, so exacting in her demands, and so determinately importunate for gifts, that she was at last unanimously voted a bore, and fell into complete disfavour. Yet a funny creature was Attah, and generally a merry one ; her antics were inimitably ridiculous and grotesque,

and accompanied by grimaces which gave one pain by sympathy at the unnatural distortion of feature; she possessed a turn for comedy and mimic displays, and this was often exercised for our amusement and —her profit.

CHAPTER VI.

Friends.—Presents.—Tuski Preferences.—A Lá-loóp.—The Tuski Dandy.
—A State Visit.—Curious Dances.—The Oldest Inhabitant.—The
Dead.—New Ideas.—Wootair.—Appearance of the Country.—A
Chief's Yarang.—The Sea.

SUCH an unexpected influx of distinguished visitors obliged us to use exertion for their entertainment and reception. The sledges were carefully disposed upon the roof and ice-plank, and the dogs secured in their respective bands, on the forecastle or round the ship; the reindeer could not very well be brought on board, and moreover required their suppers, which our store of blubber and half-putrid walrus flesh, kept for our dogs, and now borrowed from to feed those of our guests, would not serve to supply; they were therefore driven off for the night to one of the neighbouring valleys, where moss abounded. My acquaintance with Mooldooyah and his family had by this time, by mutual liking, warmed into a sincere and durable friendship. I had early been impressed with a favourable opinion of their kind and generous

natures, first created probably by my transaction with the son concerning the coat. Subsequent intercourse confirmed me in my regard for them ; I found strong affection and a self-denying disposition existing with them towards each other, and was delighted to be a sharer in their regards. Between them and myself the usual business of barter was never employed ; gifts were interchanged without thought of a bargain ; whatever I needed had but to be whispered to be immediately supplied ; while presents of all kinds, some of them really valuable, poured in upon me in a manner quite embarrassing. I do not mean to assume that all this was done without expectation of a return, but I am quite sure that my gifts, especially at first, were inadequate to the worth of theirs. Yaneenga had now brought me the entire carcass of a reindeer, a pair of mitts, stockings, and breeches, all of fawn skin, of superior beauty and dressing, and her joy was infinitely greater at giving than my really very great delight at receiving so handsome a present. The deer was by the local regulations yielded up for the use of the ship's company in common, but the other articles were carried to my cabin and neatly disposed in the drawers by Yaneenga, who was well nigh as much pleased at performing this act of confidential service as in the bestowal of her gifts,

which, although presented by her individually, were of course understood to be from her husband and son also.

Our friends were distributed between the cabin and gun-room, and supplied with refreshment ; but only a few of our edibles were relished by them, the preserved meats in particular being held in very light estimation generally, a few natives only, who persevered in eating them, gaining an acquired taste for their flavour. I think that the spices employed in their preparation were especially disagreeable to the native palate. On one occasion, I remember a number of young men, "just arrived from the country," rejecting with disgust a large tin of delicious beef, which had not been bestowed upon them without murmurs of dissatisfaction, and only because there was an absolute necessity to provide them with food. As they would not eat this, we had nothing left but some blubber which had been purchased for the dogs and for oil ; this was offered them as a *dernier resort*, but our fears for its favourable reception might have been spared ; it was devoured with the greatest avidity. Of all our stores, those most preferred were biscuit, sugar, raisins, or indeed anything sweet, and also almonds, of which we had a quantity in our private stock. The passion for sugar was general ; great and

small begged for it in preference to all else, and a morsel for a "lá-loóp" would make its possessor happy for the day. What on earth is a lá-loóp? I hear the reader ask. Know, then, that this source of delight consisted of a fragment of leaf tobacco which enveloped the scrap of sugar before-mentioned, and was placed carefully in the cheek, where it remained undisturbedly dispensing its liquid medley of sweet and bitter to the infinite content of its consumer. Many a brow of cloudy aspect have I smoothed and rendered smiling and serene by a well-timed application of this little luxury.

In the evening a masquerade was arranged for the amusement of our visitors, some of whom, become familiar with the fun, took an active share in the festivities; of these were Omdooyah and his dame, Inopincha, the lady who munched the candle, and another person whose real name I quite forget, for we never called him by it; we knew him only as the Tchouški dandy.

I suppose it is an inevitable provision of all societies that some few among their components are doomed to act the popinjay, and seek to be esteemed by their outward show. The votary of Bond-street, the petit-maître of the Boulevards, were here fitly represented by our Tuski friend; his dress was

cut and donned in a manner entirely differing from the mode adopted by his fellows; pendant tags of leather, each strip having a bead, and scraps of dyed fur aptly mimicked the frogs and braids of his more advanced brother in fashion; nor was he blind to the indispensable qualifications of the fop; his cap and mocassins were as carefully selected as hat and boots elsewhere. Thus bedecked and bedizened, he strutted on the scene with an air of self-satisfaction and of admiration, which, while it provoked a smile, incited rather melancholy reflections on the likeness of man here and elsewhere. Our guests were as much diverted as we could desire, and night was far encroached upon ere they were all disposed in slumber.

On the 15th of January, the day being very fine and clear, Captain Moore determined to go in state to Woorel, to make a formal presentation of christening gifts to the child baptised on the 28th of December. Attended by a numerous train, his sledge tastefully arranged and surmounted by the Union Jack, he departed on his errand, and a short time sufficed to bring the party to their destination, where epaulettes were donned, and the presents displayed. They consisted of a black fur dress lined with white fox-skin, bracelets and necklace of beads, the latter

made in the form of a cross, and some other articles of dress and ornament, making a very tolerable show. After considerable delay the child was brought out for the inspection of its sponsors, and a poor little wretch it looked; dirty, shivering, and blind from accumulation of serous matter, the result of neglected ophthalmia. It was very soon withdrawn into the recesses of its paternal dwelling, alike to its own and our relief; and the ceremony wound up by an interchange of good wishes, and the distribution of some of our treasures of provision to the leading members of the village, and a scramble of raisins to the children, which put them in high glee.

The fiddle had been brought to aid in the fun, and was soon in requisition to accompany the motions of a troop of merry girls, who, hand in hand, crowded full of glee round the performer, urging a speedy commencement of his music, by mimicry and pantomimic gibe. When he struck up a tune they receded in a half moon with mincing step and fantastic evolutions of the head and arms; the centre then approached, and wings receded; then all alternately approached and retired *en masse*, as if to tempt their musician to follow, who soon willingly humoured their bent and imitated their motions. This continued for a while, when the dancers broke

their line and dispersed, re-formed once or twice behind the player, and advanced upon him unawares; and finally yielded up their places to three funny little creatures, whose performances absolutely convulsed us with laughter; the dance they practised is very common among the children, but we now saw it for the first time, and considered it a truly remarkable spectacle. The dresses of the females are made very full and hang in folds; in children they make the figure look podgy and squat, and so the three actresses appeared as they faced us in a row, with their toes turned in and their hands tucked into opposite sleeves. The attitude before commencing was mirth-provoking; but how shall I succeed in conveying a just appreciation of their subsequent movements? It is I fear impossible; no art could properly pourtray the scene, the inimitable gestures or the unrivalled archness of the whole affair. Swaying bodily, with a slight jump to either side, the outside ones faced or turned themselves from the centre child by turns, she appearing alternately to court and repel their advances; thus they continued, while repeating in a measured chant "*Cah—pó—moingén, mclotáh, noingén,*" at the end of which all suddenly jumped quite round, and saying, *um—um—um*, with a sort of satisfied enunciation, threw

into their bodies three of the most extraordinary contortions I ever beheld. No one could resist the last manœuvre; we all screamed with laughter, which brought tears into our eyes; indeed I never witnessed this most ridiculous dance without a return of my present mirth. I have never been able to translate to my satisfaction the words they used on these occasions; but as they almost invariably derive their amusements from natural models, and as I knew *moingen* to be a mouse or an ermine, *melotah*, a rabbit or hare, and *noingen* to mean tail, I venture, from a consideration of the pantomimic motions displayed, to render the sentence thus—

Cah-pó	moingen	melotah	noingen,
Catell	ermine	rabbit.	tail,

or, ermine catch rabbit by the tail; the final expressions, *Um—um—um*, might signify that the chase was successfully accomplished, and their accompanying wriggles personate the struggles of the victim—for ermine do catch rabbits, though I never heard of their choosing the tail as the best spot for a grip, their aim being, I believe, invariably the back of the neck.

Before we departed from the village, its “oldest inhabitant” was brought out to satisfy her curiosity respecting the strangers; but she, poor soul, was

stone blind, so could only feel our clothes and faces, lingering in surprise upon our beards, which were by this time of a very respectable length : she seemed much gratified when Captain Moore spoke to her and gave her a little tobacco. Her age was guessed at hazard to be about eighty, but with the exception of sight none of her senses seemed to be impaired, and her blindness appeared rather the result of disease than of age, her eyes being bleared and sore, and running with rheum. Indeed ophthalmia is more or less very prevalent here, principally induced I should think by snow blindness and neglect.

We were much shocked to see near the village stages erected, upon which the dead were laid, and exposed alike to the attacks of the elements and of the numerous crows, or rather ravens of immense size, which abound in great numbers, and are literally the scavengers of the country. These birds have wonderful power of beak ; with a single blow I have known one of them pierce the side of a dead and hard frozen dog, penetrating right through to the entrails.

An earnest endeavour was made on this occasion to show Omdooyah and Attah, who lived here, how shocking was this practice of exposing the dead ; but although they appeared to understand the appeal, it made I fear little impression on their cold natures,

long accustomed to this frightful habit. It was also attempted to explain to them that neither moon nor stars are fire, as they supposed, but worlds, probably inhabited like our own; this seemed to be astounding information, and the kah, kah, kahs, were frequent. Attah was readily made to understand the difference of treatment attending the practice of good and evil: that if failing to do well, she would be subject to fire for a long, long time; and if doing rightly, would ascend to the skies and be happy. Her signs of comprehension on this occasion were touchingly simple; she pointed to the lips of her instructor, and to her own ears; then laying one hand upon her heart, with the other she took his hand, and pressed it affectionately.

On the 23rd of January a trip was taken to Wootair, the village in which Metra and Mooldooyah resided. The party consisted of Captain Moore, Mr. Lindsay, and myself, with some of the natives. Proceeding down Emma's harbour, and for a considerable distance up the western arm of the bay, we struck right across country to the westward. Soon after quitting the ice, our road wound up a most tremendous ascent of between two and three miles in length: all were here obliged to dismount, and even assist the dogs in their labour, and we had

often to stop to breathe, both dogs and men, so steep and laborious was the acclivity.* We were quite delighted when the sun became once more visible over the ridge as we attained the summit, where a lengthened halt was made while the party partook of refreshment with a keen relish. We were now upon a large and level plain, which from its appearance and advantageous situation for irrigation from the surrounding hills, should afford in temperate seasons most excellent pasture. It comprised an area of seven or eight square miles, encompassed by hills, snow-clad from summit to base, excepting only where abrupt overhanging ledges of rock formed an obstruction to the deposit of drift, or where enormous blocks and gigantic pinnacles of the same material, apparently red granite, were numerous, frequently assuming extraordinarily fantastic shapes, as in an instance pointed out by Captain Moore, where a perpendicular piece presented an exact resemblance to an old man with a pipe in his mouth.

We had here a very excellent view of three distinct chains of hills, all of similar configuration, and evidently, as well as the adjacent eminences, and indeed the whole of the mountains in this part of the country, of volcanic formation, mostly in an advancing stage, but in many, extinct craters might

be traced. The wind from the S.W. was strong, and here swept down over the hills in eddies, raising a heavy 'snow-drift, which made us all look like millers. Upon the opposite side of the plain we had to descend a long hill, which was not nearly so steep as that by which we mounted. At its foot lay a frozen sheet of water, in which, we were informed, was plenty of fish: this was either a lake or the estuary of a small river which we presently crossed: no tidal marks could be sought for, as its edges were covered with snow. Our road now lay through a long and narrow valley, at the end of which another, but short hill, had to be ascended; indeed we were running across the spurs of a mountain-range, and traversed hill and vale until we reached the shore of a very large lake, called Yeem-too-oon, four or five miles broad, and from twelve to fifteen in length. This affords plenty of fish, and we saw upon it a number of persons engaged in fishing or seal watching. This lake was crossed, and we had now another toilsome ascent to encounter; arrived at the summit of which, a comprehensive view of Wootair was presented, spreading over a large extent of land. The huts belonging to Mooldooyah and his family were five in number, situated upon an abrupt hill overlooking those, twenty in all, which lay in the plain

below where Metra's yarang was. Mooldooyah, with his wife and son, who accompanied us on the journey as guides, now branched off to their own habitation; the rest of the party continuing the journey over a rough descent, which soon became most precipitous, and indeed dangerous to inexperienced drivers. The sledges flew down this at a frightful pace, frequently running over the dogs; and here strong nerves were very useful, as a single false turn would have precipitated us down a shelf, seventy or eighty feet high, upon the ice. Reaching the bottom in safety, we made a short détour over a frozen inlet, and then up the opposite bank to that just quitted, which brought us directly in front of Metra's yarang, to which we immediately repaired. This yarang was very much larger than any we had before visited, the compartments higher and broader, and infinitely cleaner than the disgustingly dirty habitations we had hitherto seen at Woorel; nor were vile odours perceptible, such as there assailed our nostrils. We entered the part of the dwelling appropriated to Metra and his wife, which was kept in beautiful order—a credit to the untiring diligence of the matron. Caymgliche, Metra's wife, suffered I think greatly from ill health, and seldom left her yarang, preferring also, I believe, the charms of her household duties to the rather doubtful

enjoyment of what is sometimes called "gadding about." At any rate she generally staid at home, and was a hard-working, bustling, tidy soul as one would desire to see, a little shrewish perhaps, scolding somewhat occasionally; but then those men were so careless! and gave so much trouble! her asperity must not be wondered at. And really the place was very neat, the walrus hides on the ground were bright and clear, not a speck to be seen upon them; not a stray hair, which come out of the reindeer skins in plenty, was ever permitted to remain after the night-coverings were removed; the wooden vessels were bright as dairy pails, and the oil in the lamps was always carefully purified, and the weet-o-weet [moss] wicks arranged with scrupulous regularity. By the by, there is considerable skill required in the management of these lamps: the moss, which has been carefully cleansed, dried, and picked, is put into the dish by hand, but after that it is only touched with a small flat stick, used in the most dexterous manner—a touch here and a flick there—to replace any stray morsel; then a rapid pass from one end of the ridge to the other, which knocks off the snuffy portions and clears the whole line of flame; and lo! the lamp burns brightly again. The women are very jealous of these; no man ever thinks of touching them, and it was the greatest

trial we could make of the ladies' good humour to take up the trimmer or stick and commence to trim the light, which I may as well mention, we never learned to do properly, and even Yancenga, in whose yarang I could do just as I liked, though she never prevented me, yet was always in a fidget until I ceased meddling with the lamp; one must be careful too in this operation; or else the well-nigh boiling oil spatters over face and hands most unpleasantly.

From some cause unexplained, Metra did not appear to evince great pleasure at our visit; he seemed cool, and his manner constrained; and this was the more to be wondered at, as Messrs. Simpson and Martin, who had paid a visit here some days before, gave a most flattering account of their treatment. I did not, indeed, expect Metra, whose manner was always so very deliberate, to display any frantic demonstrations of delight; but I was obliged to coincide with the view that the agreeability of our visit was more than questionable, which was surprising, as this honour was rarely paid by our chief. We had not, however, come so long a distance to sit down in displeasure and discomfort, and accordingly made all necessary arrangements for the night's sojourn, the first consideration being to make some tea and take supper. To our own provision

was added some venison, boiled in the establishment ; of which, however, from the delectable flavour of oil, &c., which pervaded it, a very slight taste sufficed, and we finished from our own stores. Supper over, the presents were displayed and distributed by Captain Moore : they comprised a saw, knives, beads, needles, and tobacco, and gave the recipients great delight. After this, determined to keep our spirits up, although the place was fearfully hot—90° of Fahrenheit—various efforts at amusement were tried : the power of the magnet was shown ; and the sight of some needles, which were made by means of it to dance to music, threw the natives into amazement at our superior mode of conjuring. Next we had some songs, with the fiddle accompaniment. I suppose pretty well two-thirds of the inhabitants of the village were crowded into the hut ; the curtain of the apartment in which we sat was raised, and the space filled up with dusky heads, wedged into a compact mass ; wild shouts and tones of wonder testified their delight and astonishment at our doings. When we ceased, a native *dancer*, or conjuror, appeared, and, seating himself in the space before us, performed a number of fantastic contortions of face and figure, all in a sitting posture, and accompanied by a continued beating of his large drum, the noise of which was in that confined

space quite deafening. Receiving a small present of tobacco, he gave place to two young girls, who, standing, rehearsed a variety of children's dances—if that could be called dancing where the feet were never lifted; they were rather mimic displays of some subject unknown to us. After these and some other actors had concluded their performances, we signified our desire to repose; the numerous gazers were then dismissed, curtains let down, skins of the deer and sheep arranged for bedclothes, and all cold air carefully excluded by tucking the bottoms of the pendent walls closely under the inner skins. The lights were then extinguished, one only being reserved in the outer area, where the dogs lay; and we passed the night very pleasantly, the apartment being warm, without being oppressive.

Wootair lies upon the shore of a shallow bay, indenting northwards; a small shallow river, which we crossed in coming, runs into it. The coast as far as this runs nearly west, but from a bold headland projecting from the western extremity of the bay, it trends to the northward. We were told that the river was not more than knee-deep, and only afforded fish about the size of sprats; its outlet could not well be defined, snow-drift so completely disguising the correct formation of the land. Exposed to the whole

drift of the Gulf of Anadyr, the sea here is rarely frozen over, and then insecurely : it was now quite open, a speck on the horizon, evidently the land floe blown off by the wind, now strong and cold from the northward, being the only ice visible. This open water is very favourable to the natives, who have thus a chance of catching whales and walrus during the winter season ; the matter is of no consequence as regards seals, as they will bite through the ice to reach the surface, where they love to lie, alone or in numbers, frequently for hours.

CHAPTER VII.

Mooldooyah's Hospitality.—Polygamy.—The Queen of the Yarang.—Reputation.—The Contrast.—Reindeer and their Flesh.—Mooldooyah's Music.—Return to the "Plover."—Oong-wy-sac.—Distortion of Past Events.—Perplexity and Perseverance.—Tidings.—Return to the ship.

OUR intention of remaining here awhile was altered in consequence of the bad weather, which prevented the acquisition of other than very cursory information respecting the position and configuration of the coast, and we therefore prepared to shift our quarters to the habitation of Mooldooyah, not to visit whom would have appeared invidious and slighting. The indications of our removal were very distasteful to Metra and his wife, who endeavoured to persuade us to stay ; but they had really annoyed us so much by their demeanour, that this had no effect. Captain Moore walked up to Mooldooyah's hut in advance of Lindsay and myself, who waited for the sledges and baggage ; but friend Metra was very sulky, and would not deign to assist us in catching the dogs, which we were really incompetent to do ; and it was only after

frequent appeal and some reproach that assistance was afforded. The bags which contained our instruments, stores, and presents, were left in the tent until we were ready to start; and on fetching them, Lindsay observed Caymgliche inspecting the interior of one, hurriedly closing it upon his entrance. True, nothing was missed, and curiosity might have been the motive, but this was a breach of the duties of hospitality sufficiently blameable.

I have briefly noticed the size of Metra's yarang, but should mention also the cause of so much space being required, and its distribution.

I have not before spoken of the practice of polygamy, which almost universally prevails among the Tuski, and this custom is more than usually remarkable from the singular circumstances attending it. As a general principle, I believe I may assert that only one wife is considered as the head of the yarang; she shares and regulates the compartment set aside for its master; and, although seldom interfering with the internal arrangements of the other portions, has general superintendence and control over the entire establishment. She it is who, upon the arrival of fish or meat, directs their division into the several shares for men and dogs; to her the husband looks for the correct conduct and performance of the duties of the

community ; she delivers to the several female inmates their portions of skins to be cleaned or dressed, and other such work as may be required : I am of course, in this extended view of her duties, considering only the condition of the wealthier personages, who generally show great order and neatness in their arrangements. Many men have only one wife, and few more than two. If the chief or favourite wife has any children, they occupy the same apartment with herself and lord ; but the families of other wives reside with their mothers in separate places, which are allotted for their sole use ; and it is, I imagine, generally considered the duty of the man to afford a home and sustenance to those wives who have been put aside for some new favourite, as well as to the children by them ; but repudiation is perfectly recognised ; and in instances of misconduct, and sometimes of dislike, put in force without scruple or censure. In these cases the rejected wife returns to her father's or brother's lodge, and, unless a very bad character, does not generally wait long for another husband ; very often, however, returning to her original spouse—to be perhaps again discarded. Each man has as many wives as he can afford to keep, the question of food being the greatest consideration. One wealthy



in herds of reindeer may very frequently indulge his fancy for a new spouse, who of course supersedes the last as head matron, unless, as sometimes occurs, she is considered too young and inexperienced for the onerous duties of the office ; in which case the two ladies occupy the same apartment with their husband, and, strange to say, no signs of jealousy are ever displayed, nor is harmony disturbed ; long custom, no doubt, reconciles the females to these and other as curious arrangements. It will thus be seen that very large yarangs are required to afford shelter to so many persons ; besides which a home is often provided for the mother of the master, and possibly also such of his father's wives as may survive in widowhood. Metra's yarang contained ~~twenty-six~~ individuals on one occasion when I sought to ascertain the number of its inmates ; but I will not venture to assert that these were all residents, although such is my belief, as I visited the several places at evening, when the outer door was closed, and all inside were certainly going to remain. But some may have been visitors.

From some attempts at a census which I made at different periods, I consider ten souls to be about the average number of inmates in a hut ; as, although a few may contain only a poor old couple, or even a solitary creature, dragging out the miserable remainder of

their existence, many were very large, and five or six children might pretty generally be reckoned upon to each woman. Thus Wootair could not upon my estimate contain less than two hundred persons, and I am disposed to think it exceeded that number.

Upon reaching Mooldooyah's habitation, we found Captain Moore installed at his ease, with every provision made for comfort and convenience. Water and venison were suspended over the lamps in preparation for dinner; skins nicely arranged for couches, and the hangings raised to admit the cool air; our baggage was bestowed around us with care and in quiet, and we were free to take our own way of enjoying such unobtrusive hospitality, without a crowd of eager gazers watching us like lions at feed; nor were we troubled by importunate begging, such as detracted from the dignity of Metra's station, which was undoubtedly high in the tribe. Indeed, the entire deportment of our host and his wife, who seemed to have an innate perception of propriety, was in marked contrast to that of him whose apparently unwelcome guests we had so lately been.

We enjoyed much interesting conversation with our friends here, any hiatus in speech being supplied by signs, which answered very well.

This part of the country was, we were informed,

quickly attended to, and there was an evident desire to fraternise in the most cordial style with the bearded strangers, which of course we were not backward in responding to. It was from this place principally that accounts had been derived respecting vessels having been seen; and all set to work with diligence to unravel as much as possible of the tangled web, which all people, whose communications and records are purely oral, are sure to weave round simple facts, between the occurrence and recital of which any interval of time has intervened.

Our efforts on this head would have been amusing enough to a spectator, but were really rather tiresome to ourselves, though many ludicrous misconceptions of the ideas intended to be conveyed were productive of uncontrollable mirth. For Teo was very deaf, and not more than commonly intelligent; and thus it was not surprising that we turned in preference to *la belle* Meeco for assistance in surmounting the many difficulties occurring; but the old gentleman could not rest contented when not engaged in the dialogue, and would frequently, just perhaps as the long-attempted solution of a question hung upon the turn of an instant's consideration, break in upon the confab with some remark perfectly foreign to the subject. He was really very vexatious sometimes,

that old fellow ; and withal so utterly unconscious of the troublesome nature of his interference, that he was the more provoking.

It can scarcely be imagined how much time, ingenuity, and perseverance were required to obtain anything like definite information ; and although the employment could not be otherwise than interesting and instructive, one felt at its close weary beyond belief. How many schemes were resorted to in order to gain our ends ! The whole army of signs brought into the field, with reinforcements of sketches, models, and every possible aid by expression of countenance and inflection of voice. Such great and long-continued endeavours could not be wholly unfruitful ; and I think, indeed, we had very good reason to be satisfied with the information acquired, as it set at rest any doubts which had been raised respecting the fact of ships having been seen.

We elicited unmistakeably that four vessels had been observed in the Straits lately, all going southward ; two of these were represented to have had three masts, and the others only two. One had been seen six months ; two, five ; and one, four months ago ; but from their descriptions none answered at all to either the “ Erebus,” “ Terror,” or “ Herald.” There can now, however, be little doubt

that the latter ship was seen both in going to and returning from Kötzebue Sound in September and October, 1848, to which the dates corresponded ; and one vessel was, moreover, said to have been at Iworien, which subsequent information showed to agree with the "Herald's" doings. At the time we were pretty confident that none of these had anything to do with us ; and, after gaining every scrap possible on the subject, with probably not a few additions to the actual facts, turned to other subjects. We were told that for the next two months the sea would remain frozen, that then lanes and patches of water would occur, and the Straits would be clear of ice in four months' time.

The appearance of the ice was very curious here, the sea having frequently frozen over on calm nights and broken up with the wind ; the sludge, as it is called, thus formed being driven up with masses of drift ice, had frozen irregularly into lumps and rough surfaces : much of this was soon smoothed over by the deposit of snow, which was rather deceptive to unwary pedestrians. The feet sometimes suffered severely from the sharp upturned points of ice.

We spent two pleasant days here, visiting the different yarangs and objects of interest. Captain Moore and myself departed on the 29th to return by

the coast line to inspect its configuration. This intention was very nearly fruitless; snow and wind prevented our observations, and, with the exception of discovering a magnificent land-locked harbour, remarking the highly volcanic nature of the mountains, upon some of which snow would not lie, and finding a rivulet proceeding from a hot spring, which at the distance of three or four miles from the source showed a temperature of 36° Fahrenheit, we had little success to boast of. The bad weather prevented our reaching the ship this day, and we remained for the night in Mahkatzan's yarang—a measure of disagreeable necessity; for we had only brought provisions for the day, and Mahkatzan had himself unluckily little to give us. A scrap of walrus flesh was made into a sort of soup; but even hunger could not overcome its disagreeable flavour; and we went nearly supperless to bed, and were glad enough to depart next morning, notwithstanding it blew a gale, with fearful snow drift, and a low temperature. We halted for a short time at Woorel, and reached the ship in the evening with great delight.

CHAPTER VIII.

Journey towards East Cape.—Arrangement of Villages.—Necessary to travel with Dogs.—Preparations.—Deceit.—Costume for Travelling.—Bad Weather.—Change course.—Noowook.—A new Taste of Fish.—Tchaytcheen.—Modes of killing Seals.—The Snow Storm.—The Polka.

I HAVE NOW arrived at the relation of a journey which by far exceeded in duration, interest, and extent, any other undertaken during our stay here, and shall give the events of each day in detail, as from them I hope it will be found that much and important information respecting the Tuski and their country was gained.

We continued to receive various conflicting reports of vessels seen, among others, that one was, or had been, on the American shore; several rude charts had been drawn by the natives, and there was evidently so much of important matter to be gained, and so much intelligence to be inquired into, that Captain Moore decided on despatching a party towards East Cape, for the decision of all these points. My friends, Mooldooyah and

Yaneenga, accepted the office of guides, being familiar with the coast and position of the villages; and three officers had the honour of appointment to this important duty; these were Messrs. H. Martin, W. H. Moore, and myself. It will be necessary now to offer a few remarks, that the reader may the more clearly comprehend the mode* in which this and all other journeys were performed during our stay.

The villages of the Tuski are placed at irregular distances along the line of coast; none are ever situated inland, as fishing is considered a great resource even by those who are the possessors of deer, and who therefore select the localities for their dwellings with a two-fold view. There was not a tree or even shrub to be found for a long distance from the sea; and although we might have carried spirit lamps for fuel and warmth, and tents for shelter, these would have infinitely increased the burdens, and were unnecessary, as we desired to proceed by the coast line, to learn its configuration, and visit each hamlet for information, and in these accommodation for repose could easily be found. Added to this, the heavy falls of snow and the astonishing drift which sweeps over the unsheltered face of the country in high winds, so completely alter its appearance, filling up the beds of rivers and even whole valleys, that it would be rash to adventure

into the interior, unless with guides, to whom every feature of the hills was familiar as the pages of his breviary to an eremite; and even under the most favourable circumstances I should deem it at all times hazardous.

None of our number had ever practised Arctic travelling; we knew little or nothing of the use of snow-shoes, and it was vain to think of journeying on foot without those appendages; besides which, it would have been slow and laborious work to have carried our stores of provisions, instruments, and presents. Reindeer would have been delightful steeds, fleet as the wind—and then so romantic; but we knew nothing about driving them, nor was their food to be always easily obtained; thus we came to the only easy and convenient mode of travelling, namely, by sledges and dogs, which were therefore universally employed.

We were provided with provisions for twelve days, a number of tools, trinkets, &c., for the natives, and the necessary instruments for taking observations, such as the dipping-needle and thermometers, sextants and artificial horizon, pocket chronometers, &c. We also carried a copper fiddle, made on board by our clever armourer, which had already visited more than one community to enliven its members.

We had some difficulty in obtaining as many dogs as were required for so long a period, as the natives had seldom more than one set or "train," and required these for daily use : we were therefore obliged to take the captain's team until it could be replaced.

On the morning of the 8th of February, a clear and beautiful day, with the temperature ranging from 20° to 3° below zero, our little party started from the ship under cheers from our comrades, and took the direction of Woorel, where we expected to find reinforcements of our canine steeds. On our arrival, however, we found ourselves wofully deceived, the promises to that effect were ingeniously evaded by the contractors—Attah invented a plausible tale, which was, to persuade us that her animals were lame, and moreover adrift, and not to be caught without difficulty ; while Amtin had effectually disappointed us by betaking himself, sledge, dogs and all, to a distance on the sea-ice, for the avowed purpose of seal-hunting. However, we were not to be thus checked at the outset, and, sending Ahmoleen, who was to accompany us for a short time, back to the ship to mention our ill-success, and bring on the Union-Jack which we had left behind, the journey was continued to Mahkatzan's, where we intended to remain the night.

On the road thither, we found the cold considerable ; our pipes ceased to smoke, from the moisture congealing in them, and two natives, whom we met, pointed out that Martin's check and nose were beginning to feel the frost, showing two white spots, which, however, as they gave no pain, he had been quite unconscious of, and we, who were in line, either in advance of or behind him, did not see ; but rubbing his face smartly with snow soon restored the circulation.

We reached Mahkatzan's in the afternoon, and unharnessed for the night ; Ahmoleen arrived soon after, having travelled fast with a light sledge. He brought the Union-Jack, and a note directing us to cut out an inscription upon wood, stating the particulars of our visit, and to put it up at Laureenne, whither we were bound. I fear Mahkatzan was but a niggard, or else his resources must have been scanty ; only a few small fish were placed before us, both frozen and boiled. We did not feel greatly inclined to make havoc among the first, but discussed the other with a better grace ; and with some slight addition from our own stores we made a tolerable repast, and then retired to rest.

It may not be uninteresting to describe our ordinary equipment on this trip, which I have since

learned to consider too cumbrous, though well suited to repel cold ; against which, however, activity is the best antidote. Our dress consisted of under-garments of flannel, or fleeces and linnen, trowsers of box-cloth, or breeches of reindeer or seal-skin, heavy snow-boots, which were found to be dreadfully inconvenient, large frocks or shirts of reindeer skin, with the hair outwards, over which, in snowy weather, was drawn the invaluable okoncho, a welshwig or woollen cap, covered by a huge outside one, with a long-haired border (mine was made of white bear-skin, provided, as was nearly all my excellent equipment, by the foresight of Yaneenga) ; worsted gloves, within large gauntlets or mitts, completed our costumes, which increased our bulk to double its ordinary dimensions, and made us look funny enough.

The 9th was so unfavourable, that we were compelled to delay our journey, and were sufficiently occupied in taking magnetic observations, revising our wardrobes, and re-arranging the loadings of the sledges, as considered advisable, the journey hither having suggested some few alterations in that respect ; Yaneenga, who seemed to consider us as her especial charges, busied herself in making a pair of deer-skin mocassins for Martin, that he might discard his snow-boots, which were an effectual preventive to exercise.

The morning of the 10th presented an aspect little more favourable than that of the previous day ; it blew hard with a blinding snow-drift, but we disliked to remain idle, and set off at about 8 A.M. Mahkatzan had consented, upon the consideration of certain rewards, to lend his train of dogs, and our equipages were now pretty well furnished. Mooldooyah had four, Yaneenga three, and each of ourselves five.

Knowing this immediate part of the coast sufficiently well already, it was not intended to go right round it, but to cut across to a village at some distance to the eastward ; and we proceeded with this view for a time in very great discomfort, the fine fiercely driven snow blowing directly in our faces and nearly blinding us : just when about to branch off to the westward of a range of hills near the sea, Mooldooyah, who had several times shown signs of disinclination to proceed, stopped suddenly, and acquainted us with his opinion, that it was folly to persevere in face of such obstacles ; and that he could by no means feel assured that we should not miss the right direction to our destination, which was far off, and that in this case the dogs, and even ourselves, might perish.

There was no refuting such arguments ; he knew all about the matter—we nothing ; so, of course, we

acceded to his desire of making for Tchaytcheen, whence, he said we might next day continue to the yarangas before-mentioned. He accordingly led the way in a new direction; but the weather became much worse, and a man and woman who passed us on their sledge gave up their trip and returned on our track: these indications were not wasted upon our faithful and prudent guide, who would not permit us to come to any harm for want of caution on his part. He again halted, represented that even Tchaytcheen was still distant, and that the desperate condition of the weather would render our journey thither a matter of doubtful success and safety; and ended by recommending that we should not proceed beyond Noowook, a small hamlet now in sight. The councils of our mentor were not to be held in contempt, and we submitted to his suggestions without dissent, although murmuring at the ill luck which thus checked us in the first stages of our trip. Speedily reaching Noowook, which was a miserable fishing station, consisting only of six small and dirty huts, we took up our quarters first in the habitation of Tchi-gwa.

No matter at what time of day a visitor arrives, food is instantly set before him, generally frozen fish or cold blubber, to keep him occupied

until other viands are got ready. Such was our lot in this instance ; a number of small fish, about four inches long, raw and hard frozen, were placed before us, our hosts and guides setting the example in disposing of them. Unwilling to offend their prejudices, we endeavoured to manage a little execution in this line, but found it rather contrary to our tastes, although fortunately entire congelation disguised some of the unpleasant properties attendant on uncooked and uncleaned fish. Some blubber was then brought on and done justice to by all but ourselves, to whom the simple idea was quite enough for a meal.

This yarang was very much confined ; all the smaller huts have barely sitting height and stretching length, so that one is cramped for room ; and as I was desirous of making magnetic observations, my comrades were so kind as to take up their quarters in another tent for the night. The sea was at this time covered with broken patches of ice, a few spots of water, but no distinct "lanes" visible, and it would of course have been unsafe to adventure on it. Although striving as much as possible to gain and impart information, I found my host so stupid, or so apathetic, that the efforts were painfully one-sided ; even the detail of preparations and performance with the dipping-needle, generally an object of so much curiosity and wonder,

were nearly unheeded by him. A little tobacco rewarded him amply for the slight trouble of our visit, and I lay down to sleep with 'an earnest hope for a favourable morrow.

The morning of the 11th showed much less wind and drift, but was very misty with drizzling snow : this was, however, so great an improvement on the last two days that we were glad enough to hasten our departure. We snatched a hurried breakfast while our steeds were being harnessed, and had the vexation to discover that one of the dogs, lately lent by Mah-katzan, had, with canine fidelity, departed to seek his master.

Bidding farewell to the meagre denizens of the village, we followed our guide *en route* for Tchaytcheen, and were so fortunate as to overtake a gentleman of that township who was driving leisurely homewards in his two-dog sleigh, and who upon arriving at Tchaytcheen, which we did in company, consented, for the consideration of about six ounces of tobacco, (which in the leaf looks a large quantity, and indeed is so to them,) to replace our lost dog with one of his own—a circumstance highly fortunate for us. In all such transactions as this I left the entire management to Mooldooyah, having implicit reliance upon his judgment and probity ; nor had we ever any reason

to be dissatisfied with his arrangements, in which it must be mentioned the voice of Yaneenga had much though quiet influence. Well were it always so with wives.

Tchaytcheen consisted of five small huts, situated under a range of hills, and upon the borders of Tchaytcheen harbour, which is of a magnificent character. The yarangas were mean and dirty, and the only point of interest it possessed apart from others was the arrangement of perhaps eighteen or twenty heads of whales disposed in pairs to rest boats on. I think it not improbable that it was usual to keep a number of boats here fully provided for fishing, ready to be launched at an instant's notice, when whales were reported. We desired much to have lingered awhile on the harbour which we now crossed, to make a few observations for fixing its position; but our intended halting-place was far distant, and even without delay we could not hope to reach it until after dusk. The man who replaced our lost dog accompanied us some distance across the harbour, being bound on a sealing excursion.

The mode of entrapping these animals is ingenious and deserving of notice. As I before remarked, the seals make holes in the ice, either piercing it when the crust is light, and keeping the

place open day by day, or biting right up through as much as three or four feet of solid ice. Through these holes they get on to the ice, and generally lie close to the edge of the aperture, but if not rendered shy by frequent disturbance will wander off to some distance. It has always been a matter of wonder to me how they manage (particularly small ones) to climb up the wall sides of their holes with so little apparent holding powers, but they certainly do so with perfect ease.

The natives, accomplished in all primitive arts of obtaining their prey, proceed to their task of capture with perfect self-confidence and deliberation : two modes are followed, one a simple question of patience, the other requiring much skill and strategy. In the first a mound of snow or ice is raised at some distance from the seal hole, behind which, before his prey emerges from the water, the hunter ensconces himself, and where he must wait motionless and silent for the seal to appear, which often does not occur for a long period ; great skill is then necessary to secure his victim, as, unless killed instantaneously when struck, it is almost sure to escape into its hole. I believe bears have the same mode of catching them. In the other mode, the hunter, leaving his sledge and dogs at a distance, approaches

with slow and stealthy step until the seal, which is a particularly wary creature, manifests signs of perception and alarm ; when the hunter, watchful as his quarry, sinks by almost imperceptible degrees down upon the ice, and remains there motionless until surprise has subsided, and the seal once more disposes itself to sleep, but he must now no longer remain erect and undisguised, nor may his procession be continuous. Crouching low upon the snow, he imitates with amazing fidelity the actions of the seal itself, and drags himself by slow and tortuous advances towards the hole : his vigilance must now be unwearied and unerring ; the slightest false movement, an instant's motion when the seal is looking, and plunge goes his prey into the water, rendering all his care and labour fruitless, for there is no chance of a reappearance that day ; and when one seal goes in a hurry, the rest never wait long behind, shuffling and scurrying along the ice in the most ludicrous manner ; so that all chance of sport is lost. Of this catastrophe the danger of course increases as the distance lessens, and the wariness of skilful hunters is then truly wonderful. The grand aim is to get between the seal and its hole, in which case capture may be considered pretty certain, but if this cannot be accomplished, the chasseur must endeavour to crawl right up to the animal unawares

and strike it dead at a blow. Success being attained, the hunter now goes joyfully off for his sledge, on which he places the entire carcase of his victim, for the Tuski has no foolish prejudices respecting offal; all parts of the animal are useful, and the skin is taken off with very great care and skill, being cut only at the tail and flippers. Some of these animals are very large; a splendid skin with tiger spots, presented to me by one of the Tuski chiefs, is more than five feet long, exclusive of the head and tail which are cut off, nor was this the largest we saw.

Upon reaching the opposite shore of the harbour, we struck off to the westward of a ridge of hills, leaving the sea and the road to Oongwysac on our right; this and other ranges ran in almost regular and parallel lines, in a N.W. direction, and did not vary greatly in altitude, being all about four or five hundred feet high. We now halted for a munch, for which Yancenga displayed from among her hidden stores a small quantity of dry pounded venison; this was of a very agreeable flavour, slightly resembling our own pemmican, but possessing more flavour and freshness.

The day had been misty throughout, and while we thus tarried for a space, fine snow commenced to fall thickly, and obscure our path; increasing

heavily as we continued on our way. All surrounding country was now completely hidden from view ; it was even difficult for myself, who always brought up the rear, to distinguish with clearness the form of our guide, Mooldooyah, who notwithstanding pursued his way unhesitatingly until the brief daylight began to decrease, when he showed ominous signs of wavering and doubt, stopping at times to consult with his wife, and peering anxiously into the fast thickening gloom. At last, after descending a hill, and proceeding for a short time along a level surface, Mooldooyah came to a determined halt, and realised our fears of his having been misled by telling us that we were now on salt-water ice, probably only an inlet of the sea, but he did not know what or where—in fact, that he had lost his way in the snow-fall and darkness, and that we must wait until moon-rise for light and guidance. This would not happen for four or five hours, so we sat ourselves down contentedly to wait for the advent of the queen of night to relieve us from our difficulties. We proposed indeed to show the direction of the land by compass ; but Mooldooyah rejected the offer as of little use, as even then he would be unable to find the road. Fortunately the fall of snow had brought a moderation of the cold, from which therefore we suffered little ;

and so slightly did the condition of affairs depress our spirits, that several favourite songs were sung in chorus, and Martin and myself had a dance in the snow, which deserves the name of the Tuski Polka. It was however rather too laborious an amusement to be long continued, as we were heavily encumbered with our clothes, and the snow was three feet deep : recourse was then had to smoking, and sure I am that the severest condemners of this practice would withhold their strictures in our case, where its indulgence was so great a solace.

CHAPTER IX.

Woman's Care.—The anxious Guides.—A solemn Ceremony.—Prolonged Misery and a new Disaster.—The Dilemma.—A Cruel Deception.—The last Night.—A glorious Discovery.—Hope and Deliverance.—Hunger of Dogs: its Consequences.—Thirst.—Kind Reception.—The Tuski Garrick.—The Hot Spring.—New Cookery.

THE rising of the moon brought no alteration to our condition; so thickly fell the heavy snow-flakes, we could barely tell, by a faint glimmering, in which direction she lay, and we were perforce induced to arrange our sledges for repose, following in this the movements of Mooldooyah, and aided by the suggestions and touch of Yaneenga, who was ever watchful of our comfort; not more anxious perhaps than the good man, but more alive to our wants,—and—there, I need not talk any more to show that woman always is worth a dozen of the other sex for tender care and attention.

Mooldooyah and his wife were evidently in a state of terrible anxiety for our safety; for themselves they could have little fear, inured as they were

to the rigour of the climate, although even the natives occasionally suffer dreadful, and even fatal injuries by such accidents as the present. But the case was different as concerned the strangers, whose power to resist the cold they were unacquainted with. In this extremity, recourse was had to thy powers, dread Shamanism ! and whatever people may think of it, I freely confess, that although by no means a man of weak nerves, the manner of conducting the ceremony, notwithstanding the simplicity of its details, struck me with a sensation of awe, and first opened my eyes to the real danger we were in. Quitting their sledge with slow and measured step, the pair removed to a distance from us, where Yaneenga prostrated herself in the snow, her hands upraised above her buried face : the man, turning first to the west, then to the north and south, omitting—I know not why, perhaps accidentally—the fourth point, bowed himself to each repeatedly ; like Yaneenga's, his hands and arms were upraised above his head, and he gave forth a succession of cries, which still sound in my ears as I write of them—long wailing shouts, loud, unearthly and despairing, each exhausting the lungs in their emission, like a thunder roll at first, and sinking by degrees to a melancholy faintness. In all my life I never heard any sounds to equal these for horrible impressiveness ;

the deathwail of the Irish, the shout of the Red Indian, both of which I have heard in force, fall far short of Mooldooyah's appeal to his fates. They presently returned to their sledge, where I joined them, and found Yaneenga weeping profusely but quietly, while her husband sat in moody silence and replied only briefly to my questions. Ere long I regained my own sledge and reclined against it until morning, but sleep came tardily, and then only in broken, fitful portions.

Glimmering daylight on the 12th brought no prospect of relief; the snow still thickly falling in enormous flakes, circumscribed the view at a few yards' extent, and Mooldooyah could not venture to proceed in any, as the right, direction, nor even show the way off the salt-water ice; this, however, the compass enabled us to do, and gaining the shore we travelled on until noon in great uncertainty. Being still utterly ignorant of our position, we then once more halted, obtaining shelter to leeward of a hill, for the wind had risen and the temperature fallen considerably; both these occurrences gave good cause for dread of their fatal effects in our exposed and unprepared condition.

It was clearly useless to move, since we should wander we knew not whither; patience and hope

were our only trusts, and we remained here all day, without change, once only getting a glimpse of the surrounding country, which proved to be table-land, at a considerable height, encircled by hills. Our sledges were so fully and heavily laden that they were of little service as couches; we made holes in the snow and lay in a crouching position, exposing our heads only; thus a little, very little, miserable slumber was occasionally obtained, although two days' weariness courted repose. A new disaster to one of our party soon robbed the remainder of even this taste of luxury. Our comrade, Mr. Moore, became afflicted with diarrhœa so violently that we were much alarmed on his account, and had, moreover, but scanty means of assuaging his distress. A small quantity of spirits relieved him somewhat, but he remained faint and prostrated.

This was a miserable night; darkness surrounded us without relief, for we had neither fuel nor means of obtaining light; the snow, penetrating our outer garments, thawed upon the under clothing; gauntlets and caps, frequently dropped or mislaid, were full of snow when recovered, and little round crystal balls fringing our inner caps and hair, greatly increased our discomfort. It may thus be imagined how truly

wretched was our situation, that of our poor mess-mate particularly, aggravated as it was by illness and extra exposure.

Another day dawned, but brought no comfort to our now chilled souls as well as bodies. Think, dear friends, of the utter desolation and dreariness of uninterrupted snow; the livelong day, the weary night, snow, only snow, now falling perpendicularly in broad and massive flakes, now driven by the freezing blast in slanting sheets which sought each nook and cranny for a resting-place. In scenes of stirring excitement there is much to blind one to possible contingencies, or at least they are congenial to the spirit, but this our miserable condition, desolate and monotonous, called for all the quicksilver in one's veins.

A partial clearance towards noon stimulated Mooldooyah to a new effort, but no success attended his endeavours, which only created fresh troubles. In descending a steep hill, my sledge broke down, and we had only just again started, after a long delay to repair it, when, at the steepest part of the descent, Martin's equipage turned over and threw him and a large case of pemmican out upon the snow. I tried to stop his dogs, but they ran, sledge and all, over me and escaped to the bottom of the hill, where they

were seized and held by Yaneenga, who with the others had arrived there.

Martin and I were now in a condition of perplexity. The snow reached to our hips ; it was therefore useless to attempt carrying the burden down the hill ; we tried to roll it, but raised a continually increasing mass before, and kissed the snow ourselves. One of us now, embracing the case affectionately, endeavoured to roll down with it, but soon desisted, half choked, and a new experiment was essayed, by riding double on my sledge ; but as we rolled off alternately, this scheme also was abandoned. We did that at last which reason would at first have suggested ; the pemmican was added to my load, and poor Martin had to trudge down the hill by slow and laborious steps.

Mooldooyah had now another long task, two of the sledges being much injured. The repairs being concluded, we moved on again, though without knowing any more of our position than before.

The snowfall decreased slightly towards evening, and this trifling improvement favoured an illusion, whose dissipation was a cruel disappointment to us in our jaded and dispirited state. We were, unconsciously, again approaching the sea, and suddenly hailed with transports of delight what we took to be

a collection of yarangas. Strange to say, the dogs manifested equally joyous symptoms of recognition, and needed little persuasion to make them quicken their speed towards the so welcome objects. Alas, we might have spared our glad hurrahs ; the fancied yarangas were but the bare abrupt faces of the sea cliffs, and, as we neared them, seemed to grin derisively at our bitter delusions.

So great a fall of snow had rendered travelling exceedingly difficult, particularly with such heavily laden sledges ; the dogs could scarcely flounder along, and we were constantly obliged to lift one or the other runner from its deep furrow. These continued efforts were, in our exhausted plight, painfully laborious ; and the entire helplessness of Mr. Moore, who still suffered from his complaint, added greatly to our fatigue.

We stopped at last, from sheer inability to proceed, in the mouth of a small inlet, bordered by steep banks, and passed a night of misery and suspense, far worse than any of the preceding. The wind, sweeping remorselessly through the gorge, covered us with snow-drift, and sought to freeze the very marrow in our bones, the temperature having again fallen considerably.

That night is imprinted indelibly upon my

memory : never do I recall its tardily passing moments without shuddering at the thought of what might have been our state next morning. That we were not all frozen to death will ever be a matter of wonder to me, for our under garments had been completely saturated with melted snow, and our outer dresses were rigid as boards. The morning of the 14th presented little to justify more than a faint hope of relief. A heavy mist hung around, obscuring the scene as much as ever; and although we journeyed on, it was in a circle, for we crossed our old track. Between nine and ten, however, the mist cleared off, and gave us a considerable view, by which fortunate chance both Martin and Mooldooyah recognised a headland afar, and then knew that we were in Oong-wy-sac Coy-ee-mak, or Oongwysac harbour, and consequently could reach the village of Oongwysac ere night. We directly took bearings, in case the weather should again thicken, but it cleared as the day wore on; and using all the very moderate dispatch we could exert, Oongwysac was reached after a laborious travel of ten hours. We arrived at the yarangas in a condition of complete exhaustion; and here our first cry was for water. For water! with snow in such profusion around! Even so, good friends. Thirst was one of our greatest sufferings,

which eating snow only increased, from its inflammatory effect. Our poor dogs were almost famished. Mooldooyah would never allow us to give them our own provisions, both because we might not be able to spare them, and also that, as he stated, they could go without food for three or four days, in cases of necessity: the small quantities we nevertheless persisted in giving them once or twice, were by far inadequate to their wants, and the consequence was, that when we halted at nights, the dogs, burying themselves in the snow as usual, quietly gnawed away at their harness, which was of seal-hide; and in the morning, when attempting to depart, a solitary dog, representing the team, would possibly emerge from its lair, the rest having entirely detached themselves from the sledges; they had then to be sought for, and harnessed with whatever could be found.

My companions and myself repaired to the yarang of Teo, our guides taking up their abode in another belonging to a friend of theirs, Yappo by name. The united barking of the whole assembly of dogs, including our own, soon caused the yarangas, closed at dusk, to re-open, and we were welcomed with eagerness, which, upon a knowledge of our sorry plight, was changed into bustling assistance and exclamations of sympathy. Scarcely were we

permitted to retain free motion. Moore, who was greatly exhausted, was tended like a dying man, and we were speedily relieved from all troubles save the prostration which ensued on this long and painful trial.

Warmth and repose soon restored Martin and myself to the power of renewed exertion, but Mr. Moore remained in a very feeble state, and I wrote to Captain Moore next day, detailing our mishaps, and communicated our opinion that he had better return at once to the "Plover."

It was resolved that we should remain here until our strength should be recruited, when, if the answer from Captain Moore should be favourable, Martin and myself would endeavour to renew the fulfilment of the objects of our excursion, thus disastrously impeded. The interval of repose was broken only by scientific and other observations, and visiting the various yarangas around us. Desiring to communicate with our guides, I sought them in the hut, to which they had overnight repaired; they had already gone forth, and I was directed to a very large yarang, whither they had gone. On entering, I found my friends, and had also the good fortune to witness a national performance of a purely theatrical nature, which was curious as unexpected. In this large tent,

apparently erected for and devoted to public purposes (possibly as a council-room as well as theatre, for in place of the usual inner apartments, only a species of bench, of raised earth, ran around it), were seated numerous spectators. Yanecnga made room for me beside her, and I had a plain view of the solitary actor, who sustained his part with extraordinary skill, activity, and endurance: this performance was a representation of the practices of the Pa-erks (i. e., Esquimaux on the opposite shore of the straits :) I had before seen this slightly attempted, but the present was evidently a state occasion, and all details were carefully presented. He imitated with extravagant action—paddling, eating, and drinking, looking for an enemy, fighting, and hunting the whale, in which the efforts of the men and the struggles of the animals were grotesquely depicted, and he gesticulated throughout with furious energy. Two musicians seated upon the earth beat incessantly upon their drums; their performances seeming to be an indispensably necessary addition to the sport. The spectators applauded vociferously, in a manner scarcely less interesting than the scene they praised, any incident more striking than the rest eliciting interjections of kah! kah! kah! “da capo diminuendo,” and a low running

gurgle of approval with a continuous though subdued current of conversation, occasionally breaking out with the elders in short notes, to their fellows or the actor, of satisfaction at his efforts. By the very general interest displayed, I have little doubt that he was the Garrick of his tribe; indeed, I never saw any other among them so expert as himself by many shades: the poor fellow deserved applause if only for the labour of his performance. It may briefly be noticed, that he was clad to resemble those he mimicked, having among other peculiarities, only one mitten on—a familiar trait of Esquimaux—and threw into his action, tones and expression, a character so entirely foreign to his own that one would, unwarned, fail to recognise him as of the Tuski. I was much impressed with the view of this spectacle. Here, on the extreme of a sterile and desolate waste, on whose edge only a few uncivilised persons are scattered, the imitative faculty of man had burst forth without example, his untaught and unaided ingenuity developing itself in a thousand instances. The contemplative mind cannot but find in all these things indications of the universal superiority of man over the brute—ample food for reflection upon the mightiness of the Power who bestowed reason to direct and capability to perform.

The face of the country was so completely hidden during the winter, that we were unable to remark upon its features and constitution ; accident revealed the information that black-lead ore exists on this coast, particularly upon the point on which we now were ; two species of ochre are also found, but more rarely, and are exchanged at high prices with the denizens of distant villages, being held in great estimation as dyes, and for painting upon skins, paddles, &c., for which black-lead is also extensively used. We obtained some fresh venison here from one of the natives, who had lately purchased it, and found it welcome alike as a change and to the saving of our provisions.

While awaiting the return of our messenger to the ship, I made an excursion to a hot-spring, not far distant, in company with a Mr. No-tak-en, whose interminable garrulity was supportable only on such an occasion when one desired to acquire all the information possible ; but he was very obliging, thinking no trouble too great in the service of a friend, and this was a saving clause in his disposition. He took care to provide mocassins of seal-skin, to be assumed upon arrival at the stream ; a number of small raw fish, and one or two blue beads ; but what he was going to do with either of these I had no idea,

and left the issue to the future. A pleasant run of two hours—for having empty sledges—our dogs speeded merrily along—brought us to a line of high steep banks, under a range of rounded barren hills, all now enveloped in snow. Long ere we reached the spring, clouds of vapour hanging above, and the stream proceeding from it, showed where it lay, at the foot of a high bank, overhung in a very curious manner by a canopy of snow. Drift had, I conjecture, first formed in a mass above, which the action of the vapour had hollowed out inside, until a sort of cave of considerable height was formed; the melting snow and heated vapour had encrusted the inner surface with a smooth and glassy coating of ice, in which numerous apertures, in beautiful crystallisation, permitted the vapour to escape in volumes; depending icicles, like fragments of felspar, added to the picturesque appearance of this curious cavern. The spring was not at this time boiling at the surface, the thermometer showing only 156° of Fahrenheit; the water was strongly impregnated with salt and other substances, having a mingled taste of iron and copper, and bitter as gall. In the cauldron or basin of the spring I found a blue bead, which, however, No-tak-en carefully replaced, at the same time adding two or three of those he had brought, and telling

me to do likewise. By his signs and replies to my questions I was led to believe that these were placed there as an offering to the spirit of the spring, but I may have erred as to his meaning. Possibly the real intention was to change their colour by the chemical action of the water.

From the bed of the stream I obtained some fragments of fossil wood, which would lead one to impute a petrifying property to the spring. The fish which No-tak-en had brought he placed in the stream for about half an hour, then presented them to me as cooked; for curiosity's sake I tasted them, and found that they had become in a measure stewed, but, at the same time, had so thoroughly imbibed the ingredients of the water as to be quite unfit to eat. Two splendid alpine hares, with coats of long and spotless fur, trotted leisurely off as we arrived, and remained upon the brow of the hill watching us; we had unfortunately brought neither gun nor bow, so that they were safe from injury. After having examined the spring and stream with great interest, I returned with my companion to Oongwysac much pleased with the excursion.

CHAPTER X.

Way to manage Natives.—The Magical Magnet.—Quit Oongwysac.—The Deserted.—A Census.—May-tchoo-emin.—Tuski Games.—The trial of speed.—The Wrestlers.—A large bear-skin.—Tuski bravery.—Combats and Marks.—The Greek Cross.—A Wanderer's fate.—A disagreeable check.—Useless instruction.—A piece of good luck.—Yandangah.—Ah-mo-leen.—A Tuski gentleman.—A Tuski villa.—Hospitality.

DURING our stay here, as upon all practicable occasions, we used strenuous endeavours to obtain and impart information; we had sometimes slight, but very often gratifying results. When become a little experienced in the art of communicating with primitive people, I found my best chances of success to lie in first impressing them with feelings of respect by our apparent superiority and performance of mysterious operations, and then to engage their attention by explanation of these seeming effects of magic.

Of all things least open to their comprehension, the powers of the magnet were principal. I found it quite useless to attempt a solution of the mystery, and was necessarily content to leave it enshrouded in

darkness. That it could lift iron and steel, make needles dance, and impart its wonderful powers to other portions of metal, were phenomena which were ascribed rather to our wizard qualities than to its own merits; and the natives continued to regard all operations in this respect with a mixture of fear and wonder.

The messenger who had been despatched to the ship returned to Oongwysac with fresh instructions, and a further supply of provisions for us, permission being accorded for the resumption of the journey by Mr. Martin and myself; Mr. Moore, of course, returning to the "Plover."

The morning of the 19th—for we had been four days detained at Oongwysac—saw us once more astir upon our journey, refreshed and re-invigorated: the day was clear and sunny, and we sped along the hardened snow without a halt, taking to the sea-ice, after passing the point we had descried with so much joy on the morning of the 14th.

We passed the island of Tchatlook, which rises rocky and abrupt from the water to the height, perhaps, of 200 feet, and continued, alternately traversing strips of land and arms of the straits, until considerably past nightfall. Our guides were again slightly at fault on this occasion, as the huts were

upon the shore of a small island or peninsula (we could not, from the mass of snowdrift, tell which), and mist lay low down upon the horizon. After some delay, however, we turned off to the eastward, and soon discovered them. The aurora borealis was displayed this night in great beauty ; it lay like a fringe on a dark bank of clouds which bounded the horizon : the effect was almost funereal. Having arrived here at a late hour, we delayed repose only to take refreshment ; and set off again early next morning, after presenting our host with some tobacco and his wife with a few beads. We halted at noon on the sea-ice to obtain the latitude ; but our guides speedily tired of waiting, and set off before us to a village on a hill, in sight, at some distance, where they were to await our arrival. Martin and I, having concluded our observations and sketch, repacked the instruments upon the sledges ; and he then mounted, and set off a little before I reached my carriage : my dogs were up and off in an instant after his sledge, and both teams, gaining sight of the huts in the distance, raced towards them at full speed. Martin could not stop his dogs ; it was hopeless to expect mine to halt, and away they all scampered, leaving me to get over about two miles of distance as I best might.

I WAS fully clad in riding costume, for the temperature was very low at this time, and the snow-crust, only sufficiently thick to bear dogs and sledges, broke in and let me through as far as my knees at each footstep. The holes thus made were only just the size of my feet, and I was therefore obliged to lift my legs perpendicularly each time. My toil may be imagined; but a third of the distance was accomplished with dreadful fatigue, when Mooldooyah, seeing and appreciating my difficulties, despatched one of the villagers on my sledge to my deliverance. After a brief halt, we continued on until evening, when another village was reached, where we obtained lodging for the night. A spring of delicious water was passed to-day: it showed a temperature of 41.

At Nootchoome, through which we passed during the 21st, we stopped for a short time, more to satisfy the curiosity of the inhabitants than for our own convenience. It was a fishing village of eight huts; and I obtained, with considerable pains, a rough statement of the population; but, although considering it near the truth, will not vouch for its correctness: these huts were all very small, and did not, therefore, reach the general average of number. The inmates of each hut were given as follows:—

	MEN.				WOMEN				CHILDREN
(1)	1	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	2
(2)	3	.	.	.	2	.	.	.	5
(3)	0	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	2
(4)	6	.	.	.	3	.	.	.	2
(5)	1	.	.	.	0	.	.	.	1
(6)	0	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	4
(7)	1	.	.	.	0	.	.	.	1
(8)	1	.	.	.	1	.	.	.	2
	<hr/> 13				<hr/> 9				<hr/> 19
	Total				41 persons.				

This gives an average of five persons to each habitation, which, for the size of the yarangas, may be considered greater than usual.

Bestowing a trifle upon our informant and a few others, we pursued our way without matter of great interest until reaching May-tchoo-cmin, a village situated on the border of a harbour of considerable capacity and convenience, called in the charts, the Bay of Mechigme. We remained here for the night, and found sufficient amusement and interest in information gained, and a further exhibition of native customs, which was, I believe, performed for our edification.

A shed or covered stage, erected for the protection of boats and fishing-gear during the winter, stood in the centre of a level plain fronting the huts. A number of the young men, starting at a given signal, commenced to run round and round this shed, always keeping at

a certain distance from it. They continued for a very considerable time in motion, at last one by one dropped off from exhaustion, until two only remained, between whom the struggle was protracted and severe. The object of this trial being to ascertain superiority of endurance, rather than of speed, the pace was not rapid, but it was, nevertheless, imperative on the foremost runner to retain his advance, and this law caused some hard struggles for place.

I was confirmed in my view of the nature of this species of match by observing that the competitors were not allowed to divest themselves of clothing, but raced in complete costume; and that they were permitted to provide themselves with the peculiar stick which is used by them in travelling on snow or ice. This is a long thin staff of drift-wood, shod at the foot with pointed ivory or seals' tooth, and furnished with a circular frame, generally of whale-bone, sometimes six or eight inches in diameter, attached to it three or four inches above the shod; this frame is covered with a net-work of hide-cord, and its use is intended to prevent the staff going deep in the snow, and so tripping him whose support it should be: it is a valuable acquisition, particularly with snow shoes.

When this game was concluded, and our plaudits,

with more substantial tokens of approbation, had been bestowed upon the winners, two gladiators entered the arena, nude to the waist, and after rolling in the snow to refresh and render their bodies moist and slippery, like those of ancient Rome with oil, they commenced to wrestle in a peculiar and rather violent manner; the principal aim was to seize the arm, but they also took hold of each other's hair, and some rather obstinate contests took place, heavy falls and ensanguined visages showing the severity of the mimic strife. The muscular development of all the combatants was generally very fine; small and large men alike showed compact, solid frames with both power and activity. It was amusing enough to see them rub their bodies briskly with snow, and return to the encounter with renewed vigour and spirit.

We learned positively that a vessel (apparently a brig) had entered May-tchoo-cmin harbour, and remained there for a considerable time, that she came from the "Paerks" land, and went towards Iwor-i-en, when there was no ice, but our information beyond this point was rather too vague for reliance. When she had been here, and how long, or of what country she was, were points which only a future visit can determine.

We were in the habit of bartering for skins of the fox, sable, and others as they offered, and had purchased a few at different villages as we passed. Upon the shed or stage I have above noticed was a magnificent white bear-skin of an enormous size; on my requiring to see it, four men lifted it off the scaffold with difficulty and placed it upon the snow; true the skull and paws had been retained, and the skin was what is technically termed "green," that is, moist as when taken off the carcase, and it was also hard frozen; but an idea of its great size may nevertheless be formed from its weight. I endeavoured to purchase it, but thought I saw a disposition to extortion, which I would not encourage, and therefore refused the price demanded. Such skins are valuable to these people, as these animals rarely appear so low down on the coast of the Frozen Sea. They are attacked without hesitation, frequently by single individuals, and sanguinary contests are the result. We met one man who was said to have encountered a huge and savage bear with only a species of large dagger-knife, and to have succeeded in despatching it. He was frightfully injured in the contest on his breast; five huge scars caused by the claws of his adversary were visible; a terrible seam appeared on one side of his face, and he was, more-

over, crippled for life. Portions of the skin of his antagonist, which hung in his yaranga, were pointed out by him with great satisfaction, and he proudly displayed the tattooed marks on his chest, won by this dearly-bought victory. Subjoined are fac-similes of other such marks copied by myself from another man's breast on which they were pricked.



The ingredients for tattooing are tzow-gwit-zow, red ochre ; toong-e-rillery, black-lead, and some kind of blue like indigo ; but this last I never saw, and do not know whether it is an indigenous or acquired article.

Some of the "Plover's" men were, as is common among sailors, very much tattooed about the arms and breast, and the natives having once discovered these barbaric tokens never tired of inspecting them : the curious and in many instances unique devices displayed, greatly excited their wonder and admiration ; those of us who had not availed ourselves of this peculiar branch of art were subjected to many queries as to the reasons for the omission.

We were now within a short distance of the village called Lorenné, to which our instructions had definitively pointed as the probable goal of our efforts, for

at the time those orders were written it was conjectured that this was East Cape; but both Martin and myself were now of decided opinion that a considerable distance yet lay between us and that promontory, which, however, we were determined if possible to reach or get sight of.

The morning of the 22nd saw us on the road to Lorenné, whose principal man, Belconta by name, met us about halfway, and returned with us to his village. At the distance of about six miles from Lorenné, we came to a rude cross of wood which, as may well be imagined, engrossed all our attention for the time. Halting, we examined it with scrupulous care, and I think I know nearly every turn of the grain. I made a careful sketch of it, copying the Russian inscription with particular attention, and now present it to my readers *in formâ veritas*. Inquiry elicited that a man lay buried beneath this simple monument, one of the crew of a ship which had visited here; the figures, 1821, on the wood told when his clay returned to its kindred dust, and this was all we knew of the poor departed—an instance of the sailor's wayward lot and frequent sad and solitary fate.

I cut upon the cross, in two places, "H. M. S. Plover," with the date, as evidence of our visit, and

we then resumed our journey. On espying Loreenne we also saw two other clusters of huts, about two miles' distance lying between each. At Loreenne, the foremost of the three villages, we found Yaneenga's brother living, and our guides desired therefore to remain with him. To this we could not object, but as the day was yet young, we went on in charge of Belconta to the furthest range of seven huts, where he held his dwelling.

The necessity of constant watchfulness in driving was impressed upon me to day, by a rather forcible lesson. Without heeding the road, I permitted my sledge to overrun one of my dogs, which accident will often lame them, and in trying to disentangle its harness, I was bitten in the hand by the poor beast, which in its pain inflicted a severe wound.

Very slight observation confirmed our former view respecting the erroneous identification of Loreenne with East Cape; that question was soon settled, and we became very anxious to reach the next point, which, as we could see nothing beyond it, might possibly be the much-desired position: this, we were told, was called Yandangah, with a ko-ee-mak (harbour) contiguous; and the continuous trending of the coast to the eastward led us to entertain sanguine expectation that it would prove the fixed termination

of our advance ; we could, unfortunately, place no settled reliance upon our observations, from various causes, among which the frequent stopping of the chronometer^{*} from cold was perhaps the greatest inconvenience. •

To our expressions of desire to proceed to Yandangah, Mooldooyah and his wife to our surprise, returned only replies indicative of reluctance and even refusal. “The people at Yandangah,” said he, “were unfriendly to him, and he would inevitably be ‘wahl-da,’ (knifed) if he appeared among them.” Belconta was equally unwilling, and so all others to whom we applied ; even promises of extra. reward could not induce any one to take the place of guide. Whether the cause of objection was real or imagined I could not tell ; it was, at any rate, well sustained, and our chances of going to Yandangah seemed very small, unless we went by ourselves, which would have been not only rash, but also a great infraction of our instructions both in letter and spirit, and of course one or the other of these must always be observed. However we awaited patiently the advent of the morrow, and meanwhile made ourselves as comfortable as might be. Belconta’s tent was of contracted dimensions, the inner apartment being only nine feet by five feet six inches, but we were becoming used to

scanty space for lodgings. The old gentleman provided us with some nice fresh venison, which agreeably assisted in economising our provisions, and in return for all his attention we presented him with a butcher's and a saddler's knife, and some tobacco ; his wife was made happy by the acquisition of a looking-glass, a string of beads and some needles. What treasures were these ! the jewelled casket of the bride has not more charms for her delighted gaze than these simple presents to this primitive people. I assure you, dear reader, it was a sweet and unalloyed pleasure to witness the joyous transports of our simple-minded friends upon the acquisition of such gifts. We tried to instruct them too, to lead them to some idea of worlds other than their own, of people abounding in perfection of art and skill ; Religion's taper was lighted, but the flame expired in its first breath, and our labour of love was vain. After all these efforts, and they were long continued, I had recourse to my faithful copper fiddle, which, although now sorely bruised and battered by its many trying peregrinations, never refused to add its squeaking item to the general amusement.

The dialect spoken here was identical with that at Oongwysac and Kay-gwan, being a distinct idiom to that more generally employed.

We remained here during the night, and were delighted next morning by the visit of a man who signified that he belonged to Ah-mo-leen of Yandangah, which we had heard was the name of the chief residing there. Very little persuasion induced him to undertake to conduct us to that place on the morrow, and having made satisfactory arrangements, Martin and I set off for Lorenné to see Mooldooyah, and to watch for opportunities for lunars, &c.

We found the yarangas here preferable to those we had lately left ; they were cleaner and more commodious, both of which were appreciable advantages. As we did not intend to make any lengthened journey, the heavier lading of the sledges was left under care of Mooldooyah, who was to await our return. Bidding him and Yaneenga farewell, we started on the morning of the 24th escorted by Pelowyo, the man who had agreed to guide us, and another native. This was one of the finest days and most pleasant travel we had seen throughout, and having lightened sledges we were less tied to attention to our equipages than hitherto.

A run of a couple of leagues brought us to Co-cone, consisting of seven huts of tolerable size ; we only stopped there a moment to obtain a draught of water, then speeded on, passing a river and two fresh-water

lakes, besides occasional small bays of the sea, in our transit. A steep declivity of frozen snow, on which, while at a rapid pace, my dogs overturned, and much scratched me, was the finish to our day's run ; at its foot we found three yarangas, from the largest of which, ere we had well dismounted, sprang a young man, shouting,—“Toromah ! Toromah !” in accents of joyous welcome. Shaking us eagerly by the hand, he rather dragged than led us into his commodious and well-furnished habitation, and as he was a likely sprightly young fellow, whose countenance beamed with good-humour and satisfaction, we esteemed ourselves fortunate in falling into such good hands.

I have in a preceding page described a Tuski dandy : here let me do justice to the Tuski gentleman, of whom the most perfect exemplification was undoubtedly our new friend, Ahmoleen, the second, as I must call him, in distinction to the son of Mooldooyah, my first and fast friend.

Ahmoleen's arrangements were in a style quite novel to us among this people. His house, dress, sledges, dogs, appointments, and equipments, were all of the first order, and conspicuous for their surpassing neatness and propriety ; his manners were quite a relief to the ordinary conduct of the natives,

and an air of self-respect visible in every action, betokened not only his superiority, but also his knowledge of it.

Entering the yarang with our host, we were ceremoniously presented to his neat and pretty little wife, who soon showed that she had been well chosen for her industrious habits. A canopy of white sacking, variegated with printed cottons, was quickly spread over head, and deer-skins of beauty and fine condition laid down for our repose. All was bright and clean; not a speck was observable on the walrus-skin floor, nor a stray hair lodged upon one's dress. Every preparation that a hearty welcome could suggest was put in force for our comfort; we were divested of our heavy dresses, and reclined at ease in a moderate temperature, for Ahmoleen saw at once our distress in great heat, and instantly reduced it. In a very brief space of time a delightful, because clean, meal of boiled venison was served, upon which our host would have had us surfeit ourselves. He seemed very desirous that we should remain some time with him, counting five upon his fingers, to denote the days he would have us stay, and seeming greatly disappointed when we intimated our inability to accept his kind invitation. We smoked our pipes in quiet conversation, after which our host, with

delicate perception, seeing that we were fatigued with our journey and the cold air, which is mightily conducive to sleep, forbore to weary us more with many interrogatories, which he must have been eager to satisfy, and having our couches arranged, left us to repose.



TUSKI MAN.

CHAPTER XI.

Vexatious detention.—Attempts at instruction.—Tuski delicacy.—Enmity explained.—The coat of mail.—Yandangah.—Noonahmone.—Startling information.—Farewell to Ahmoleen.—Tragic tidings.—Return to the “Plover.”

WE were greatly annoyed to find the 25th the reverse of its predecessor: the wind blew fiercely, and snow fell heavily, quite marring all hopes of inspection and advance. Thus disappointed in our desires, we sought occupation in-doors, first by making observations with the magnet, and afterwards becoming sufficiently engaged in the society of our host. He was full of conversation, and never ceased to ply us with questions respecting our visit, our country, and our possessions, displaying great shrewdness in his queries, and, generally, a ready perception of our explanations. On the subject of religion alone his ideas were almost entirely at fault; doubtless we were not the most apt teachers, although endeavouring to communicate only the primitive principles, and those in the simplest

manner. Two broad statements were, however, clearly comprehended, and assented to, but whether believed, he alone knows: these were, that those wearing the cross should do good, which would insure their future elevation; while contrary behaviour would infallibly lead to very disagreeable torment by fire.

The generous fellow would not allow us to touch our own provisions while staying with him; abundance of venison, prepared in many ways, was always in readiness to meet our requirements; nor would Ahmolcen receive any present, imagining that they were tendered in payment of his hospitality, from which his native pride revolted; and it was only upon full and repeated assurance that these were designed for gifts to our friends, and had been sent by our own chief for that purpose, that he consented to receive anything.

Ahmolcen had made many visits to the Russian settlement on the Kolyma, and had become much softened in his address by even this slight intercourse. He possessed much furniture, and other property, of immense value here, obtained by barter at the annual fair. Wealthy was he, too, in reindeer and other Tuski goods, and much looked up to by the people of Yandangah, which was between two and three

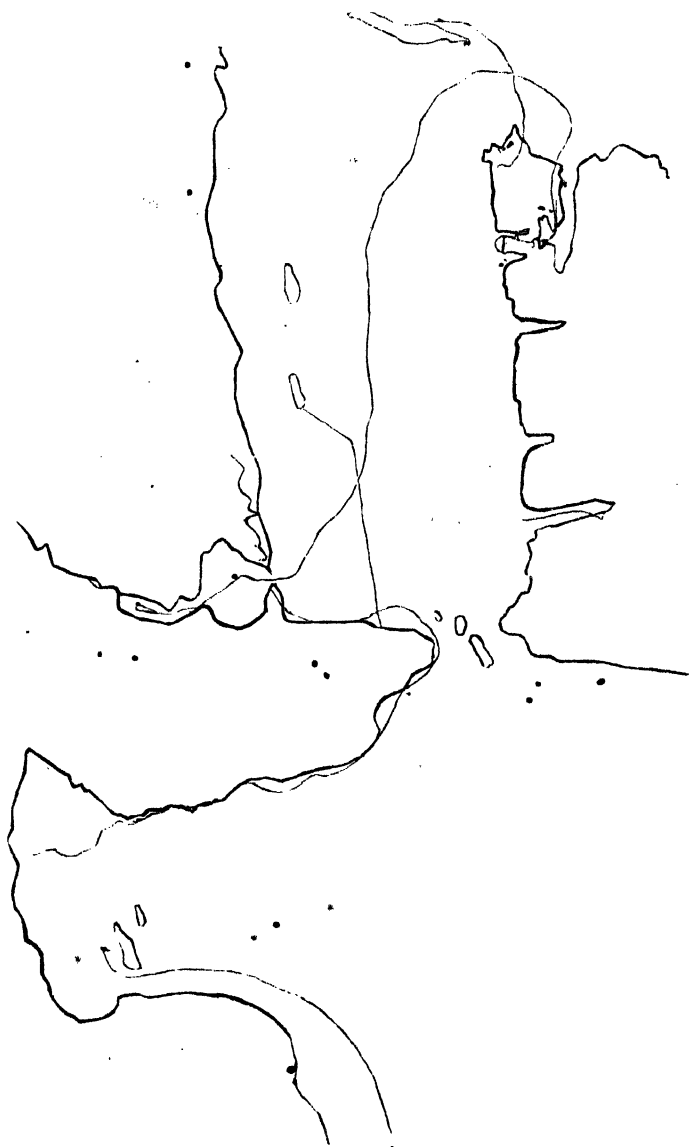
miles distant from Tchoolgen, the name given by Ahmoleen to his yarangas. I am of opinion, indeed, that he put this slight distance between himself and the Yandangahnites, with a view to partial isolation, and if this was really the case, his taste must be admired, for a dirtier set than the denizens of that village it was seldom my lot to see, even among the Tuski. The mystery of the difficulty in obtaining guides to Tchoolgen was elucidated by Ahmoleen, who stated that he was at enmity with those of Lorenné. I fancy, however, that the hostility was of a very passive nature, and would only be displayed upon accidental collision; and Ahmoleen assured us that any guide who might have accompanied us to his habitation would have been safe as ourselves.

During our frequent conversations a difficulty presented itself, which was only solved after much explanation. Ahmoleen repeatedly expressed a desire for a Pilligwinten Eran, which puzzled me beyond measure. I had by this time acquired an extensive vocabulary, and really fancied few things could bother me; but here I was completely mystified. Pilligwinten certainly meant metal, and Eran meant coat, or, as he pointed to it, waistcoat; but, good gracious! what did the man want of a metal coat? this was a poser; and I became so utterly lost in the mazes of

speculation as to this grand mystery, that it never occurred to me that it was truly a metal coat, or rather a coat of mail, that my friend desired to possess.

One, of a certain sort, he had indeed already, and brought it forth for my inspection, as I will, reader, for yours. It consisted of back and breast-plates of walrus-hide, at least a quarter of an inch thick, and in some places double, a very board for toughness, having been dried gradually in the sun. Upon these were fastened flat and thin iron plates overlapping each other. They were certainly of very little use in fortifying the hide, through which no arrow would be likely to pass, and were therefore only an additional incumbrance to an already very clumsy article, which was in fact, as Ahmoleen explained, too heavy to be worn in combats where activity was required. Hence his desire for one of lighter make. He seemed in some way to have heard of chain mail, as he described it by locking his crooked fingers into one another.

Ahmoleen constructed a sort of map of the villages along the coast, together with the islands in the straits and opposite shore, which led us to conclude that East Cape would be near the village of Po-orten. The ensuing day was in the early part as little favourable as before, and we were almost in despair of obtaining observations; late in the evening however



AHMOLEEN'S MAP OF BEHRING'S STRAITS.

we were enabled to take lunar distances with Jupiter, by which the resulting longitude led us to feel pretty well assured that we were not yet so near East Cape as we had supposed.

The 28th saw us still captive at Loreenne, and although we were singularly fortunate in our place of detention the delay was a serious misfortune; but clear weather was indispensable to the due performance of our duties, and snow fell incessantly.

So we set to work to exchange more information, and received much enlightenment upon the meaning of the word Tuski, which was of great importance in influencing my views respecting the tribe, although my present conclusions have come only tardily and after much reflection.

The opening day of March enabled us to set forth once more, now for the purpose of viewing Yandangah. After bordering the coast for about three and a half miles, we observed the settlement spread over a large extent of uneven ground. It consisted of twenty-six huts intermingled with numerous boats, and a very great number of whale-bones placed in all positions, and scattered in all directions. The weather was unfavourable, turning out snowy, but this did not deter us from getting some information of, if real, great importance.

Indefinite communications were made that the stern part of a vessel had been thrown up on the "Paerk" shore, and that the natives of that coast had obtained knives, pots, and guns, from the wreck. These news were said to have come from Po-or-ten, whither they were brought from E-mah-leen, the chief of the islands near East Cape, about eight months since. We passed the night in a small hut very prettily placed on the cliff, about thirty feet above the sea, but the picturesque exterior little atoned for the discomfort inside; hut, host, and all else, were models of filth. The people were moreover brutish and rude, and begged importunately for everything we displayed.

Before continuing the journey towards East Cape, which was clearly yet far distant, we resolved to return to Lorenné for a fresh supply of provisions and to communicate with Mooldooyah, who might become alarmed at our protracted absence.

Accordingly, on the 3rd, despite heavy snow and biting wind, we started under the care of two attentive and able guides; reached the village of Co-cone after dark, and remained there that night, renewing our journey next morning in a lull, for the weather was very bad.

We reached Lorenné at an early hour, and were received with delight by our faithful friends, of whom

we were sorry to find Yaneenga suffering greatly from some affection of the back and chest, probably induced by the long exposure to cold and wet lately experienced. Mooldooyah was informed of our desire to proceed to Noonahmone, and consented with great reluctance, declining to go himself, partly in consequence of Yaneenga's illness, and also that he would not consider himself safe in that quarter. But, as he observed, the people would scarcely dare to risk condign punishment by injuring any of the "Atwoits Callowole," with whom, moreover, they could have no cause of enmity.

As our absence would now be of uncertain length, it was arranged that Mooldooyah and his wife should return to their home at Wootair, visiting the "Plover" on the way to report progress. He furnished us with some of his dogs, and obtained a trustworthy guide for us, whose name was At-tchoo-re-gen. On the 6th we set off towards Noonahmone, touched at Co-cone, and reached Tchoolgen in the afternoon. We remained there all night to the great delight of our friend Ahmoleen, who next morning accompanied us to Noonahmone. We crossed Yandangah harbour, called in the charts "Bay of St. Lawrence," (a splendid haven, in which were two fine islands) and reached Noonahmone about four in the afternoon; from this a

headland to the eastward arrested our attention, and making towards it we observed therefrom the three islands in the straits and land still trending to the eastward; then returning to Noonahmone we remained at that place for the night.

The information gained here respecting a wreck was much the same as that given at Yandangah, but our communicant was so stupid as to damp our ardent search for further particulars.

On the 8th we started for Cheengeen, and while driving round a bay to its eastern extreme, mounted a tall hummock of rough ice on the sea, whence we saw with great distinctness the three islands in the middle of the straits and the loom of the opposite shore. We took a sketch and observations at this point, after which we went on to Cheengeen. From this position, which was high, we had at last the great satisfaction of viewing, without a shadow of doubt, the Eastern Cape of Asia, rising to a considerable height above the sea, and crowned with rough points and a large and populous village.

Respecting the wreck, about which we naturally made inquiries on every possible opportunity, we were here told that only fragments of a hull and stern frame had been thrown up, from which, in place of pots or knives, only nails had been drawn. The

news had been communicated by boats, apparently seven or eight months ago, but any more than this we could not learn with certainty.

We were now all agog to proceed to Po-orten, the village upon the Cape, but our desires were imperatively checked by the refusal of any one to accompany us, and the positive assurance of the great risk we should incur by persisting in the attempt. A different language was said to be spoken there, and the natives represented to be at feud with their neighbours, and of a fierce intractable disposition. Thus urgently warned, we did not consider ourselves justified in proceeding, particularly without guides, and relinquished the ardent hope with deep regret, which has never since diminished in my mind. We therefore made preparations for return to the "Plover;" took sketches of the surrounding land and islands, made such observations as were possible, obtained specimens of black-lead ore and colouring stone, and distributed a few presents, our stock of which was by this time getting low. On the 9th we took a last look at East Cape, and quitting Cheengeen commenced our homeward journey.

Noonahmone was passed without delay, and we reached Tchoolgen at seven in the evening, passing one more night in the yarang of our obliging and agreeable

friend Ahmoleen, who had escorted us on the late journey, and was now full of tribulation at our final separation.

On the 10th we ran through Co-cone to Lorene, at which place, from a sledge breaking down, we did not arrive until late at night. Our instructions had indicated Lorene as a place of great importance; we desired therefore to make observations conclusive of its position, and having been directed to put up an inscription, set about preparing it, carving upon a piece of board the "Plover's" name with place and date of wintering.

Bad weather setting in detained us here until the 15th, very much to our annoyance, for several reasons, of which the principal *must* by and by be touched upon, as without it my narrative would be incomplete. On the 15th then we departed, and on the road to Maytchoocmin met a native of Wootair, who informed us of the death of one of our men. We received these tidings with sadness rather than surprise, having long feared that one poor fellow approached his end, and making little doubt that this was he of whom the native spoke.

Our return was accomplished with much less of incident and delay than had marked our outward journey; most of the desired information was already

obtained, and, except in very bad weather, we seldom delayed for any length of time. We reached the "Plover" at even on the 20th of March, sufficiently rejoiced to be once more among our companions, by whom we were pleasantly welcomed, and again to know the comforts of cleanliness and the luxury of a bed.



WOMAN AND CHILD.

CHAPTER XII.

A Tuski Feast.—A Tuski Smoke.—The Ladies' Privilege.—The draught.—
The Tuski Plague.—A sacred ceremony.—The Shaman.—Description
of boats, rope, &c.—Embroidery, carving, &c.—Fire-making.

I HAVE forborne throughout my narrative to enter into more than occasional notice of the food of the Tuski, and their modes of preparing it, thinking it better to present at one picture the numerous varieties, which indeed are all provided at feasts given by the wealthy, but in part only at more moderate entertainments.

I propose now to set before you in detail the history of a Tuski repast of the most sumptuous nature, as myself and companions partook of it, and trust you may find it as much to your taste as they do to theirs. It is, I believe, with nearly all people in a primitive condition, the first and paramount duty of hospitality to provide the visitor with food immediately on his entrance, and such was the rule in Tuski customs. First was brought in on a huge wooden tray, a number of small fish, uncooked, but

intensely frozen. At these all the natives set to work, and we essayed, somewhat ruefully, it must be confessed, to follow their example, but, being all unused to such gastronomic process, found ourselves, as might be expected, rather at a loss how to commence. From this dilemma, however, our host speedily extricated us, by practical demonstration of the correct mode of action, and under his certainly very able tuition we shortly became more expert. But alas ! a new difficulty was soon presented ; our native companions, we presume, either made a hasty bolt of each morsel, or had perhaps a relish for the flavour of the viands now under consideration. Not so ourselves ; it was sadly repugnant to our palates, for, aided by the newly-acquired knowledge that the fish were in the same condition as when taken from the water, uncleaned and unembowelled, we speedily discovered that we could neither bolt nor retain the fragments which, by the primitive aid of teeth and nails, we had rashly detached from our piscatorial share.

It was to no purpose that our host pressed us to "fall to ;" we could not manage the consumption of this favourite preparation (or rather lack thereof), and succeeded with difficulty in evading his earnest solicitations.

The next course was a mess of green stuff, looking

as if carefully chopped up, and this was also hard frozen. To it was added a lump of blubber, which the lady presiding, who did all the carving, dexterously cut into slices, with a knife, like a cheese-monger's, and apportioned out, at different quarters of the huge tray before mentioned, which was used throughout the meal, together with a modicum of the grass-like stuff, to the company; the only distinction in favour of the strangers and guests of high degree being that their slices were cut much thinner than for the rest. We tasted this compound, and we didn't like it; at this no one will wonder; the blubber speaks for itself, and the other stuff, which really was not very unpalatable, we discovered in after-times to be *the unruminated food of reindeer* which had been slaughtered; at least, so we were told, but I am not quite clear on this point. Our dislike to the dish had no offensive effect upon our host, who only seemed to be astonished at our strange want of taste, and with the rest of the guests, soon cleared the board, the managing dame putting the finishing stroke by a rapid sweep of her not too scrupulously clean fingers over the dish, by way of clearing off the fragments, to prepare for the reception of the next delicacy. After this interesting operation she conveyed her digits to her mouth, and,

engulfing them for a brief period, withdrew them quite in apple-pie order once more.

The board was now again replenished, this time with viands less repellent to our unnurtured tastes. Boiled seal and walrus flesh appeared, and our hospitable friends were greatly relieved when they beheld us assist in the consumption of these items, which, being utterly devoid of flavour, were distasteful only from their extreme toughness and mode of presentation, but we did not, of course, desire to appear too singular or squeamish. Next came a portion of whale's flesh, or, rather, whale's skin; this was perfect ebony in hue, and we discovered some apprehensions respecting its fitness as an article of food; but our fears were groundless. It was cut and recut crosswise into diminutive cubes; venturing upon one of which we were agreeably surprised to find it possessing a cocoa-nut flavour, like which also it ate, "very short;" indeed so much astonished were we on this occasion that we had consumed a very considerable number of these cubes, and with great relish too, before we recovered from our wonder. This dish was ever afterwards a favourite with me. On its disappearance a very limited quantity of boiled reindeer meat, fresh and fat, was served up, to which we did ample justice; then came portions of the gum

of the whale, in which the ends of the bone lay still embedded, and I do not hesitate to declare that this was perfectly delicious, its flavour being, as nearly as I can find a parallel, like that of cream cheese. This, which the Tuski call their sugar, was the wind-up to the repast and ourselves, and we were fain to admit that, after the rather unpleasant auspices with which our feast commenced, the finale was by no means to be contemned.

Each of those who had borne a part in the proceedings of the evening now threw himself back in an evident condition of complacency : ourselves only, unused to such a *table d'hôte*, experienced symptoms of slight oppression.

A new medium of luxury was now put in requisition—I mean the practice of smoking—which demands a special notice. Before our visit to this people all the tobacco they used was obtained from the Russians by barter, principally at the settlement of Kolyma, but also, I conjecture, at the fort on the Anadyr. It is of course very sparingly supplied, and having been brought so great a distance, is much valued. In order to eke out the scanty quantity as far as compatible with its enjoyment, it is broken up into minute fragments, and mixed with wood, similarly small, but differently manufactured, and

showing in a remarkable degree how the savage, whose share of life's supplies is limited, economises and turns to account every scrap which falls in his way. The fragments of drift-wood thrown but rarely on this shore are considered with the greatest attention as to the best use to which they may be devoted, and to which they are then adapted with infinite patience and care. A small knife, with a bent blade and a handle generally made of the tip of a deer's horn, is in great use among them, and employed to a surprising extent; with it they thin down sticks to the required size for whip-handles or walking-staves, and it is this operation which provides wood to mix with the tobacco. No chips are hacked off, that would be useless waste. With the fore finger on the back of his queer little knife, the operator runs from one extreme to the other of the stick, in a rapid succession of strokes, detaching each time a gossamer twisted shred, of the same unbroken length as the stick. It is wonderful to see the regularity with which string after string of woody fibre is separated, and the skill and patience—well nigh equal to that of the Chinese, who rubs down a nail to make a needle—employed to reduce the wand to its required proportions. When finished, it leaves the hand of the operator as smoothly rounded and nicely tapered

as if produced by the lathe. The shreds are collected in a bundle, cut and recut across and across, until sufficiently fine, when they are mixed with the tobacco in proportions varying with the quantity of the latter in stock, but generally, I believe, about one-third part of wood is used. The mixture is then put carefully away in a well-made bag, of dressed seal-skin, from which the small pouch hanging to the girdle, with picker, steel, and tinder-bag, is replenished.

The Tuski use pipes of wood and ivory, either divided along the middle into two parts, for convenience of cleaning, or with a large trap-door in the under part, which allows a few pieces of dry grass to be laid inside, to absorb the moisture, and when closed, is covered with a strip of leather, which effectually keeps it air-tight. When about to smoke, a pinch of hair is plucked from the deerskin frock and pushed with the pricker down the very small hole in the bowl of the pipe: this is to prevent the tobacco from drawing through; from the pouch at the girdle a minute quantity of the mixture, not more than half a thimbleful, is then put upon this, and the smoker then strikes fire with steel and fragment of pebble, generally a tiny morsel of cornelian or agate, into the smallest imaginable piece of a kind of fungus,

resembling German tinder, which is evidently very scarce, and used with the greatest economy. But one indraught of smoke is taken, a long, deep inspiration, the entire volume passing into the lungs; in a second or two it is expelled, in a similar manner, with a long, loud aspiration, sounding betwixt a groan and a sigh: this stertorous kind of breathing is repeated several times, heavily, and as if from pain, the person closing the mouth each time, as if gasping for breath. These operations appear to afford intense enjoyment, and are possibly of use in clearing the lungs. The process of pipe-cleaning is intrusted to the women, who replenish the dry grass in the body of the pipe; the refuse deposit is their perquisite, and devoured with great gusto, the essential oil of the tobacco forming apparently a pleasant excitant to their oil-clogged palates. The smoke quite concluded, the natives betake themselves to the vessels containing water; and we were perfectly amazed at their capacity in this respect,—I should think each person would swallow at least half a gallon at a draught. No doubt so much fluid is necessary to dissolve the quantities of oleaginous food consumed. The draught is a finishing stroke: all immediately lie down to sleep, unless, as was to our annoyance most frequently the case, on occasions of our visits, religious

or rejoicing ceremonies are to be practised, when in come those horrid drums, and keep one in misery for a couple of hours ; and heartily glad were we ever when, drums and yells hushed, skin walls let down, and lamps extinguished, we were permitted to lie down and dream of "marble halls," or more genial regions than those into which we had adventured.

I have said that the principal reason for disinclination to remain in the native huts longer than was dictated by absolute necessity, must imperatively be noticed ; and I now do so with as light a touch as will convey an idea of the absolutely dreadful nature of this objection.

The persons, clothes, habitations, and even dogs of the Tuski, were covered with vermin, not in a slight degree, but absolutely swarming ; and it is doubtless from this cause that they clip the hair on the head. The first days of our journey brought the horrible conviction that it was hopeless to avoid the plague while in contact with the people. In vain our clothes were changed and washed repeatedly ; in vain we attempted to isolate ourselves as much as possible ; the evil increased each day ; and at last our condition became insupportably tormenting ; those of excitable temperament being denied sleep or rest by the constant irritation, and reaching a state bordering

upon madness. It was particularly when repose was courted that our torment was greatest. When travelling out of doors the cold checked the attacks of the foe, which only resumed their onslaught with new vigour when reanimated by the great heat of the yarangas. This was the most fearful infliction experienced during our stay in Tuski land, and far surpassed anything I ever suffered ; producing in me an agitation of the nerves, like St. Vitus' dance.

A few days' rest prepared us for renewed efforts. On the 24th of March I was dispatched to Wootair, for the purpose of obtaining magnetic and other observations ; these were delayed by the occurrence of bad weather ; and I returned to the ship only on the 1st of April. During my stay at Woorel I was witness to a ceremony of a highly curious and peculiar nature ; but I was unable to form from it, and others of a like description, more than a very faint idea of the structure of their religion.

My friend Ahmoleen had been so fortunate as to kill a small whale, which was a circumstance to be celebrated with feasting and rejoicing. Upon the bank above the sea was lit a fire, into which were thrown the entrails of a puppy, just strangled ; its carcase was then cast into the wave. Fish, venison, blubber, and some other sorts of food were boiled

over this fire, and minced very fine ; the head, fins, and tail of the whale, were disposed near, and upon them were laid small portions of the cooked food, a few beads, some tobacco, and mites of several other of their most valuable articles. The food, when cooked, was handed round in separate platters to the assembled crowd, each of whom was also presented with a small strip of tobacco ; nor was I omitted in this attention, although the latter article had been obtained from me for the purpose. After all had been served, and some time allowed to elapse, the offerings upon the fish, together with pieces cut from its head, tail and fins were consumed in the fire. All was conducted in almost unbroken silence ; even the queries, which with ill judgment I presumed upon my friendship to put to Ahmoleen, who was the person principally officiating, were responded to in an under tone ; and the company, comprising the greater part of the villagers, seemed impressed with a sense of the sacred nature of the ceremonies. Inside his yarang, Mooldooyah, Ahmoleen's father, whom I have before said I believed to be a shaman, or priest, beat incessantly upon the largest drum I ever saw among the people, chanting monotonously in a succession of quivering notes, and drawling out the words to a great length. The

burden of his ditty, which might easily have been taken for a dirge rather than a song of rejoicing, ran very much in this way:—"Ah.....h mo.....o le.....en, K...à.poo.....ok ah.....h, Wahl.....dah; M à.....à zi.....n.....kah, M à.....zi.....n . kah, K à.....à poo.....k.....ah, Ka.....poo.....kah;"* and so on, *ad libitum*, with an occasional change into "Ah.....h.....h.....ah.....ah," as his breath denied utterance to the words. There was much to strike one as extraordinary in the appearance of this minister of a rude religion. Seated crosslegged in his tent, nude from the waist upwards, his body swaying to and fro with the intonations of his chant, perspiration streaming from every pore of his vast bulk, the huge tarabourine filling the entire space with its reverberations, and, above all, the expression of conviction impressed upon his lineaments of the sacred importance of his duty, Mooldooyah acquired a new and imposing character, far different to his ordinary nature.

This ceremony, and the one we witnessed with so much effect when lost in the snow, together with the slighter indications of religious practices displayed at different times, lead one, in some degree, to draw a parallel between them and the ancient observances,

* Ahmoleen a whale has killed good, good, the whale, the whale, &c.

both Jewish and Roman ; one cannot fail especially to be struck with the resemblance of the lately related ceremonies to the proceedings of the heathen Augurs and the burnt and meat offerings of the Jews.

Mooldooyah and his wife, Yanëengah, had both been baptised by Russian priests, upon a visit to Kolyma : he received the name of Petroko, or Peter ; she was christened Anna ; but these titles, together with the bare recollection of the ceremony, a small Greek cross, and what I conjectured to be certificates of baptism, were all that remained of the sacred rite.

I had a good opportunity here of examining the very curious boats of the natives, which serve alike to transport great quantities of goods, or for the purposes of the chase. They are light but very tough, being composed of walrus-skins, which, as I have before noticed, are beautifully prepared, sewn over a light frame of wood. They are flat-bottomed, and nearly wall-sided ; about forty inches in breadth at the widest part of the gunwales, and a foot or fourteen inches less below, decreasing in width to either end, which is just wide enough to admit a man's body. The edges of the gunwale are neatly worked over with thin hide or strips of whalebone. They are propelled with great speed by paddles, which are also used in bow and stern to direct their

course. The smooth surface of the walrus-skin offers little resistance to their passage through the water, and they are carefully prevented from becoming sodden or incrustated, being carried on shore the instant they are done with, turned over and beaten with stout sticks, to drive off the moisture, and keep the skin in shape, as it would otherwise be liable to bag.

The weapons used for whale hunting are lances and harpoons, both tipped with ivory barbs, but I do not know whether lines are used, although I think it probable from the great quantity manufactured and its excellence, the lines of walrus-hide particularly, which are immensely tough. These are made by cutting round and round a skin without a break until it is all used; the rope is soaked in water until quite soft, then rolled and stretched repeatedly; by these operations it becomes beautifully round without any edges visible, and of an uniform thickness throughout.

The Tuski understand the art of tanning, and are able to produce very fair specimens, but practise it principally with sealskin, which is dressed in all colours; the white is very delicate and much prized. Deerskins are dressed with ammonia, red-ochre, and other materials, they are rendered very soft and pliable, but the mode of curing gives them an

exceedingly unpleasant odour, which is only imperceptible in cold weather.

Embroidery is much practised, principally with the long white hair from the belly of the reindeer; strips and figures of differently coloured leather, dyed fur and feathers of the eider-duck are also employed for ornament; besides, as I have before mentioned, designs in black lead or ochre, and a species of parti-coloured patchwork or "insertion."

Much ingenuity is displayed in carving articles from ivory, in which employment one of the tribe at this village was a proficient. He made ducks, geese, seals, canoes, and many other curious toys and models, and was also very fond of carving figures; a pipe of ivory, which he made for me in about six hours, had on the bowl a face in front and on either side, the back was filled up by a figure less than an inch high seated upon a block, having one leg crossed upon the knee of the other. This was a very handsome and well-finished piece of sculpture. Another man here was in great request as a maker and ornamentor of wooden pipes, particularly for inlaying them with lead or solder, which after our arrival was practised to a much greater extent than previously.

The snow-shoes in use among this people are generally about two feet in length, broad and flat, the

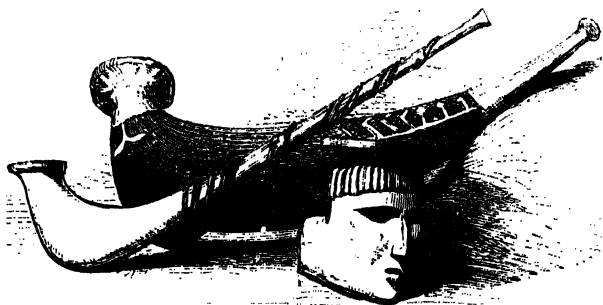
fore part eight inches in width, tapering to a point behind, where, to prevent sinking in the snow, a piece of whalebone four inches broad and eighteen long, is attached; the nettings are of seal or walrus-hide. For smooth ice or snow, shods of carved ivory, having serrated edges, are fastened under the moccasin, and prove of great service.

I am surprised that we never saw any kind of spectacles or protection from the blinding glare of the snow in spring time, for the people suffer dreadfully from snow-blindness and ophthalmia. These ailments and headache they relieve greatly by perforating the skin on the temples; forming a sort of seton, and frequent application was made to our obliging surgeon for the performance of this operation. I did not learn anything respecting any other remedies they employ in illness, excepting scarification. In the spring, nature relieves the system by copious vicarious bleeding, which they do not check.

The journey to Kolyma occupies, we were told, a period of six months; that to the other place they visit, conjectured to be the Fort on the Anadyr, takes four. While we were on the coast no one departed, or we should have noticed their preparations with care, but some men had been several times, although certainly not, as Wrangell supposes, passing their lives

in such journeys. Mooldooyah, the miscalled Missionary, and Amtin, were of the number who had thus travelled, and the latter knew more on the subject than any one except Ahmoleen of Yandangah, who described, and even named, two or three of the Russian traders, among whom he spoke of one Simon, a man of very obese proportions, which it was fine fun to my friend to mimic, for, as I have before noticed, this talent they possess in a considerable degree. The journeys to Kolyma are undertaken with reindeer and large covered sledges ; furs and ivory are taken to be exchanged for tobacco in the leaf, of a very inferior nature ; common rough beads, generally of a dull opaque blue ; knives ; printed cottons, of which loose, flowing dresses are made to go over the fur clothes in place of the okonch ; probably also a little sugar, and I rather think very small quantities of spirits, as “kamisse,” or more properly “ay-ke-mish,” doubtless a corruption of ayak-memil, (fire-water) was by no means unknown to them and eagerly sought for. To obtain it no sacrifice was considered too great, and the most sacred ties were loosed with indifference in its pursuit. We were much puzzled for a long time to tell how fire was produced each morning in the huts,—the husband evidently gave no assistance in the way of steel and tinder, but at last we

found out all about it. A piece of flat board has a number of small holes made in it, into one of which one end of a pointed stick is placed, the other extremity fitting into a sort of breast-plate, put on by the woman officiating, who with a bow works the stick to and fro rapidly, just as in drilling a hole. In about ten minutes, under favourable circumstances, she succeeds in detaching burning fibres of the wood : these are hastily put into a handful of dried grass, which envelopes them, and by rapid motion through the air kindles into flame. This is a most laborious operation, and the poor women were loud in their expressions of joy when we struck fire with lucifers for them ; a solitary act of the kind was a great boon, but a present of half a dozen matches brought down blessings on one's head.



TUSKI PIPES.

CHAPTER XIII.

Matricide, a deed of horror.—The Bride's departure.—A novel punishment.
— Snow-Blindness. — Companionship. — Refraction. — Games. — The
Cripple.—Amusements of children.—Cutting out.—Caymgliche the
grateful.—The ungrateful Stranger.—Summary.

A CUSTOM exists with this people which must shock the least delicate sensibilities of civilisation, so utterly repugnant is it to all laws human or divine. Tidings were one morning brought to the ship that one of the elder women of Woorel had died on the previous night. Enquiring into the circumstances of her decease, we were informed with the most perfect indifference of manner, that she had been "Wah-let-tah" (stabbed) by her son. We could not at first conceive this horrible statement to be true, but unmistakeable signs put it beyond a doubt, nor did our remarks on the frightful nature of the act elicit the slightest token of reciprocal feeling. Why should not the old woman die? aged and feeble, weary of life, and a burden to herself and others, she no longer desired to cumber the earth, and claimed of him who

owned nearest relationship, the friendly stroke which should let out her scanty remnant of existence. Her desire was obeyed with an apathy only to be accounted for by the enshrouding veil of custom, and her life was ended by him to whom she had given it, and whose first throbbings she had cherished. What more ghastly, more unnatural than this! To take life in any way is fearful; infanticide revolts the senses; but for a man to proceed with the utmost deliberation to cut the fast diminishing thread of existence of his mother, of her who gave him birth and nursed his feeble ray of existence into strength, is a deed of which the idea curdles the warm blood in one's veins, and creates dark feelings of horror and dismay.

Returning on the first of April to the ship, I received instructions the same evening to depart on the morrow with a large party of the natives to a place called En-mil-lane, situated at a considerable distance along the coast to the westward. The party I joined was evidently conducting a bride to her new home, together with her dowry, with which six or seven sledges were heavily laden. It consisted of large bladders of very beautiful pemmican, venison fat, reindeer skins and clothes, some few trinkets obtained from ourselves, and other matters, but the provision greatly preponderated. The bridegroom,

who escorted the damsel, was much younger than his bride, and treated with very little distinction by herself and the rest of the party. I should think there is no waste of *tendre amour* in this clime; the present occasion looked very business-like indeed. We passed four or five days on the journey, halting each night at some one of the little villages, which were very comfortable, and I was glad when we reached Enmillane, a large and populous village near Cape Atchen, from which a sweeping view of great extent may be obtained of the coast, both to the south-east and north-west. I had now reached the farthest point attained by any of our company to the westward, as Mr. Martin and myself had done to the eastward on the former protracted journey. The whole distance in a bee-line from our farthest to the east and west, or more properly north-east and north-west from the ship, were not perhaps more than a hundred and twenty, and sixty miles respectively, but many hundreds of miles were passed over in their accomplishment, from the irregularity of the coast-line and frequent occasions of return.

On this last journey I had no civilised companion; for eleven days *Tuski* were my sole comrades, nor had I the slightest uneasiness among them, although now visiting a quarter quite new to us, and of whose

people many had never seen the Atwoit or its Callowole. Secure in the friendly animus nearly always displayed, and now speaking the language with some facility, I jogged along with my savage friends quite complacently, and never was allowed to lag behind or need assistance; an extra dog would be speedily afforded if my own team lacked speed to keep pace with the rest, and on all occasions of halting, unharnessing, &c., many willing hands superseded my own efforts.

We were singularly unfortunate during this trip in the weather, and in consequence I made very few observations for position, the dipping-needle accompanied me as usual (together with the copper fiddle, we three were inseparable), and I obtained a few results of the magnetic declination and intensity, but otherwise little of importance was achieved beyond gaining additional knowledge of the manners and customs of this very peculiar people. Some curious but cruel modes of punishing the dogs were witnessed, which one could scarcely suppose would even be invented as a chastisement. The dogs turn very sulky and obstinate sometimes; I have frequently seen them stop short in a most determined manner, either offended with their fellows, the road, or the driver, and scarcely any amount of punishment, in

the regular way, will then induce them to budge. If the whip is applied, they throw themselves down in the snow, howl vigorously at first, their cries gradually subsiding into a short moan at each blow; occasionally a good whipping has the desired effect, and the dog resumes its labour, but the struggle for supremacy between master and beast is often protracted and severe. I have seen men, who knew the temper of the dog they were about to punish, deliberately dispose themselves to the task, place one foot upon their sledge, and, throwing back their arms to clear their dress, rain down blow after blow upon the wretched creature, sometimes for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour continuously; it is seldom this treatment fails of success, and the beast, if subdued, becomes tractable enough for a long time: but on one occasion, Amtin, a man of a particularly cold-blooded and savage nature, being displeased with the conduct of one of his dogs, quietly drew his knife, stabbed the animal in two places, unharnessed it, wiped the blade of his weapon on its coat, and proceeded on his visit to the ship without the least concern.

. When ordinary modes of chastisement have failed, the proceedings then instituted are very curious indeed. The driver gets off his sledge, seizes the

the dog which has misconducted itself, and makes a nice little hole in the snow, in which he arranges the unfortunate wretch's nose with the greatest care and attention to its suitable position ; having thus made due preparation, he pounds away at the snout of his victim with the butt-end of his whip, which is generally a piece of heavy flat ivory, in the most remorseless manner. I used, particularly on first viewing this novel punishment, to be under great fears that the noses of the poor beasts must inevitably be broken or crushed, but no such consequence ensued, nor had our remonstrances any effect ; punishment had been determined on, and it was certainly administered without wavering. If the snow was too soft for the purpose, the man's foot was often placed as a support for the victim's nose. This punishment must be dreadful ; the dogs know perfectly well what is coming the instant their masters touch them, and tremble in every limb : they do not attempt to howl loudly, and when released only make an occasional short yell as they run ; the most stubborn tempers are subdued in this way ; no more trouble will be given in the day's drive one may be quite assured ; it is a most summary way of inducing submission.

Enmillane received the solitary stranger with tokens

of great satisfaction, the place of honour by the lamp and at the board were awarded him, and no means spared to prove that he was welcome. Being informed by Belkonta, who was of the party, how little the ordinary food was to the taste of the strangers, only preparations of venison were offered, and I feasted like an alderman. Nothing equalled the pemmican for flavour or substance; it was manufactured of the finest fresh meat, boiled and mixed with hard fat, put into bladders and allowed to freeze, in which state it was delicious, and particularly refreshing in the heated yarangas. By the way, I cannot understand how the natives can endure these great extremes of heat and cold; I have quitted an outward temperature of -20° to enter yarangas where the thermometer registered $+100^{\circ}$; a change of a hundred and twenty degrees in one day seems almost enough to kill one, but this is experienced by the Tuski pretty well during their entire lives, and they are certainly hardy and robust enough.

On our return the spring had fairly set in, and the noonday power of the sun softened the surface of the snow, which speedily froze again, on the withdrawal of his beams. The face of the country became one vast sheet of shining sparkling white,

which reflected the sun's rays and inflicted great inconvenience, and in some cases much pain in the eyes. The sensations attending snow-blindness, which I partially experienced, are as unpleasant as may well be imagined ; one feels as if numerous pricking morsels had entered the eyes, the lids wink incessantly, and streams of water are exuded ; this was the extent of my sufferings, but in aggravated cases the inflammation increases, the lids become relaxed, and the patient loses the power of vision entirely for a time, and suffers intense pain upon exposure to a strong light ; darkness and cooling lotions, such as sugar of lead, diluted spirits, and laudanum, are now essential to relief and recovery ; but I believe that those who have once been afflicted with this very painful disorder, can never again expose themselves to the spring snow for any period without experiencing a return, and no doubt the eyesight is much weakened by it. At this time also the dogs' feet suffer much from the minute crystals on the hard crust of the snow ; they become very sore, and sometimes bleed. The natives have in consequence little socks of leather which tie on the paws, and are a great protection. The speed with which one travels is however much increased from the diminution of friction, and when there is a track the dogs keep along it in a

continuous trot, requiring very little attention. At such times the usual watchfulness is relaxed, the sledges are allowed to run side by side, or the riders seat themselves sideways on their carriages, and converse agreeably, or eat a bit of lunch together, combining their stores, on our part a few pieces of biscuit, and, as a great favour, a wee taste of ay-ke-misch, on the other side a store of pemmican, or dried fish, pounded fine, which is by no means a disagreeable condiment, having much the flavour of caviare.

A present of homœopathic quantities of sugar and leaf tobacco to my companion would now put him in possession of a lá-loóp, and an immense fund of good-humour: a fumigation on my part made me equally content; thus we jogged along tranquilly at peace with the world and each other. Sometimes we struck up a song, alternately or together, Belkonta, who acted as my guide on this excursion, and was very intelligent, quickly following lead, and endeavouring, with some success, to repeat the words; but of all sounds, and I tried all I knew for experiment, none suited him so well as German, which he repeated after me with much facility, and learned several words of a favourite song of mine. At this season "mirage" displays its wonders of distortion to a great extent, it produces

many curious effects which are often very deceptive. I was much diverted by the appearance of some natives on the summit of a hill about two miles distant from us ; they were much magnified, and their forms perverted by the haze ; their waddling gait was increased to a roll which was irresistibly ludicrous. We halted for a night at Wootair, on our return, and I was made partaker in amusements and exercises, some of which were new to me.

Two men seated themselves feet to feet on the floor of the yarang, and each strove to pull the other towards him, which was the aim of the struggle. In another game they contended in a similar manner, but squatting upon hands and knees, with their legs bent under them. In a third trial, a circular band was passed over the necks of the pair, each of whom, leaning back, exerted his best endeavours to prove himself the most headstrong—a complete satire upon matrimony. Several other kinds of gymnastics were practised, all calling for great muscular effort ; the natives jumped fair distances, but could not equal us in a jump of height, yet they have a very curious spring, which we were not at all able to match them in ; this was leaping right off the ground, kicking, while in the air, a bar or rope frequently breast high. In the yarangas they slung themselves by one or

other limb, and performed some puzzling but not otherwise difficult contortions.

In all such exercises we always took a part, but were careful to avoid the slightest approach to anger or annoyance; wrestling was the only pastime at all hazardous in this respect, as our laws were different to theirs, and the custom of one side might not be considered fair on the other, it was therefore rarely practised. Ever willing to promote amusement, I introduced many of our own games; some were comprehended and fairly imitated. Two rather undignified feats I was very fond of performing, as a challenge to my friends, whose invariably unsuccessful attempts to do likewise never failed to create stifling merriment among the spectators; the first was, standing on my head, which they did not all understand how to manage, the other was throwing somersets backwards from a recumbent posture; this manœuvre all were unable to accomplish, from the ill-arranged balance of their figures, only one person ever following me, and he was much more expert than I for a very good reason; the poor fellow had no legs, or at least only short stumps remaining, so had no leverage to overcome; the history of his misfortune, told to me in his presence, showed that even men so hardy must sometimes succumb to the rigour of

their climate, and recalled with lively recollection the period of privation experienced by my companions and myself on a late occasion, and conjured up painful images of the horrible fate we might have met. On an occasion when it was necessary to drive the reindeer to a distance inland for pasture, this man, with another, had performed the task, and while engaged in tending them, or perhaps on the return journey, were surrounded by a snow storm, lost their way, and were two days and nights exposed to the lowest temperature. The end of this period found his comrade a rigid corpse, and himself a hopeless cripple, his legs being frozen quite through nearly to the thighs ; how he reached home I do not know, nor how he recovered from such a horrible condition ; most probably he was sought for, or perhaps dragged himself to the nearest hamlet, and vigour of constitution must have saved him from sinking under the tedious and trying period of recovery ; here he was at any rate stumping along upon the two remnants of legs, each of which had a broad flattened pad beneath, to serve as a sort of foot, without which he would sink into the snow.

I do not know any sight more calculated to excite feelings of commiseration and melancholy reflection, than that of a strong man, full of power and activity,

struck down in an instant to a mutilated and helpless condition : he who before, perhaps, towered above his fellows, now moves below the smallest, he who was the ready protector of the weak, now blesses a fragile woman for assistance. Only blindness equals so sad a condition—that is helplessness indeed. The man whose sad story I have just related, was among the finest of the natives, he had evidently been very tall, had a handsome, rather intellectual face, and was still quite young, perhaps not more than thirty.

It was quite impossible to arrive at any conclusion respecting the ages of these people, or their average term of existence ; the age to which they might arrive it is of course quite useless to seek, as the thread is cut short in so reckless a manner, but I have no doubt that they reach an advanced period of life, and that a hundred years would not be too extended a limit to assign them. An old woman at Wootair had lost every particle of hair, was utterly blind, nearly toothless, and a very atomy for emaciation ; this poor old creature, shrivelled and sightless, must have been very aged, and the only wonder is that she had been so long permitted to live, for although we were only made acquainted with one instance of matricide, the utter apathy with which the deed was done and the tidings communi-

cated, proved it to be an event of frequent, indeed habitual occurrence. We never heard of any instance of infanticide, so can make no comment upon the information received by Wrangell, that all weakly and deformed children are destroyed ; whether this is the case or otherwise, I can only remark, that I never saw the parent's love for their offspring more strongly exemplified than here ; the natives absolutely doat upon their children, particularly in their earlier years, expend much time, ingenuity, and expense upon their clothes, and cram them with all sorts of delicacies ; but it is probable Wrangell's information was correct, as I never remember to have seen a deformity nor children of sickly constitution.

It is very curious to observe how in all lands the amusements of the children follow in miniature the occupations of their elders. Few countries are there where dolls are not a great resource ; the Tuski children have theirs ; make and clothe them with the minutest attention to details ; every article of dress is provided, and everything puts on and off in the proper manner ; the boys have miniature sledges, boats, and bows and arrows, the girls their dolls, and also embroidery, which they early begin to practise as a pastime, and soon become expert in.

I returned to the "Plover" on the 12th of April,

and was immediately despatched to survey the main branch of the harbour, in the lesser fork of which we were located ; the tracks of bears, probably the grizzly, were now becoming numerous, and I cannot but consider that myself and companion, one of the crew, had a very narrow escape from death by one of these animals. As I was about to go on with work at some distance from the ship, we took, one morning, the tent and several other articles, intending to remain out a night or two, but heavy mist and drizzling snow coming on, I resolved to return that day and resume on the morrow. Accordingly we dug to some depth in the snow and buried the tent, and with it, among other things, a pair of snow-boots, which I had brought for a change in case of need. Next day on returning to the spot we found the track of a very large bear leading to it, and discovered that the brute had exhumed our buried goods, and finding nothing to its taste, had bitten my snow-boots all to pieces, through an inch of cork and wooden pins, which must have sadly torn its mouth ; it had scattered everything about as if in mischief or rage, and pulled down our marking staves, which were bitten all to pieces. As these brutes are very ferocious, particularly when hungry, I think we were fortunate in our absence, nor did we after this think it wise to risk a night's stay

out, and always carried fire-arms. By the time this task was concluded we had begun to cut out of our icy prison, a work which fully employed our small crew for the major part of a month. The distance from the ship to the edge of the ice was about a mile and a quarter, and the ice averaged quite five feet in thickness. This work was continued through some very severe weather, without other than unavoidable cessation, and we were heartily glad on the 13th of June to see a clear lane of water reaching to the long imprisoned " Plover," which soon quitted her " icy cradle " and lay once more free on the bosom of the wave. This event well nigh concluded our communications with the Tuski. We anchored near Woorel and were invaded by an almost unbroken stream of atwoits, which were crowded with natives, who came to take a last farewell of the friends so lately made to be so soon separated. The greater number of our visitants were women, the nien being diligently engaged in making the most of their brief season of summer : they came laden with presents, wild-fowl, which had now arrived in numbers ; eggs ; boots, belts, and gloves all finely embroidered, and whatever else they thought would be appreciated. I have much satisfaction in recording an instance of grateful feeling which occurred at this time, a lively proof of the

existence among this people of the best emotions of the heart had no other been afforded.

Of all the articles of dress possessed by our friends, none was more coveted than a pair of breeches made by Caymgliche for her husband Metra; some one among us had seen them when on a visit to Wootair, Caymgliche displaying them with honest pride, and the encomiums on that occasion inflamed the rest with a desire to view and to possess these wondrous inexpressibles, which were indeed very handsome, being splendidly dressed dogskin, with long glossy and perfectly jet black hair. They created quite a furore, but Caymgliche was deaf to all moderate or even good offers, and placed a prohibitory price upon them, notwithstanding which hopes were still entertained of their being yielded at a lower price by and by.

During one of the many visits I made to Wootair, Caymgliche was suffering greatly from violent headache and low fever, which, as there was no one present better qualified, I endeavoured to relieve; bandaged her head with handkerchiefs dipped in cooling lotions, prepared some savoury broth, and in fact did a good deal in the nursing way, which would have made me a subject for mirth among my companions, and I dare say with many of my fair readers too. The laugh

may pass, I was rewarded by seeing my patient convalescent and very thankful for my little care, and returning to the ship I soon lost sight of the occurrence. Not so Caymgliche, her gratitude had remained in full force, and with a delicacy of sentiment one would hardly suppose to exist in a mind so untutored, she determined to display, by an unmistakeable token, her recognition of my slight service; accordingly, when with Yaneenga and others she came on board on the last visit, I was surprised that in addition to the offerings of my friend Mooldooyah's wife, Caymgliche also had her tribute to bestow, and among the treasures of her donation were the much coveted name-~~them~~-nots. This was an enigma. I could not for an instant suppose that Caymgliche, who with her husband had the character of "screws," could mean otherwise than "tok," and quickly asked her price, but the poor creature with eagerness and delight made me understand that my acceptance was all she desired, and with Yaneenga explained the reason for her conduct.

Caymgliche had I trust no reason to repent her generous determination. I turn from this act which calls for so much admiration to one which was equally culpable as the other was praiseworthy, and which I, for my shame is now to be recorded, have never, ridiculous as it may seem, ceased to regret. No

articles in our possession were more coveted than combs, and as we had only a supply for our own use, the natives were not very successful in the fulfillment of their desires on this head. My faithful friend Yaneenga, who had ever striven with such exemplary attention to provide me with whatever she thought would be prized, begged but for one token, which would be alike valuable for use and as a memorial: this desired object was a comb, but as I only possessed one, and in the peculiar circumstances of our sojourn dared not risk its deprivation, I promised to give her one moiety thereof, retaining the other. With blameable negligence I omitted to do this until too late; occupied with many duties I did not notice the departure of the boats, and I fear Yaneenga upbraids to this day the ungrateful stranger who could be so unmindful of her parting wish as to neglect to give her what, to him a trifle, was to her so ardently coveted a treasure; if ever I see her again, or can send, she shall have a gross.

I have now little more to say of the Tuski, we had only trifling further communication with them in our passage up Behring's Straits, and a brief summary will conclude your acquaintance with them. We sailed from Emma's Harbour at the end of June, and proceeded up Behring's Straits, anchoring several

times near the Asiatic shore, on which occasions parties of our friends visited the ship. The last point of contact was the Bay of St. Laurence, on whose shore stands Noonahmone, and near which Ahmolcen, of Yandangah, resided ; he soon came on board, and kindly supplied us with several reindeer for fresh provision. Preparations were made at this time to despatch boats to the coast of America, to proceed along it to the eastward, as light winds created fears of the delay of the ship, but a fair breeze springing up, the order for their departure was countermanded, and bidding farewell to Asia, and the people among whom we had so long tarried, we steered for Kötzebue Sound, on the American coast, and anchored near Chamisso Island on the 14th of July ; much ice, several American whalers, and multitudes of whales, seals, walrus, and wild-fowl, having been seen on the passage from our wintering-place.

We had now taken leave of a race whose character and attributes, as they were presented to our view, I cannot on the whole regard in other than a favourable light. Previous slight acquaintance has represented them as fierce, warlike, and intractable ; there is undoubtedly a spirit of independence, united with indomitable courage, which would lead them, as reported of their conduct when invaded, to resist

all endeavours at subjugation with constancy and firmness ; but of this, we whose intentions and relations were avowedly and undeviatingly pacific, had no active proof. My experiences lead me to characterise them as phlegmatic, deliberate in speech and action ; naturally indolent, perhaps, but obliged by the scanty resources of their land to bestir themselves in providing subsistence and the very few comforts they possess ; worthy of confidence, although shrewd at a bargain, and in occasional instances displaying a pilfering tendency ; (which, however, I believe was exercised only upon the property of the stranger) and even this some I am sure scorned to participate in ; hospitable in the extreme, and exceedingly fond of company. Of the structure of their religion I know very little. Magic and evil spirits are certainly constituents ; how far the former is extended I am ignorant, as also whether they worship or simply deprecate the displeasure of the latter in their ceremonies. I have no means of judging of their belief in a benign spirit, but incline to the view that the sun is importantly connected with their notions, and that they assign to each of the elements, and even perhaps the different winds and other natural objects, a controlling and dispensing spirit.

Of their social condition my narrative offers nearly a sufficient picture; they are in a measure socialists, and divided into distinct small brotherhoods of a very peculiar nature, from which, as I understand, their designation of *Tuski* is derived. They afford an additional proof of the love of home alike in people of savage as luxurious climes; questions as to whether they would leave their country and go with us to see new wonders, and obtain riches in profusion, elicited, notwithstanding the dazzling prospect, only decided refusal.

As regards matrimony, it may briefly be remarked, that polygamy is a matter of choice, and repudiation a recognised, although not a frequent, practice. Betrothals take place at an early age, and often without regard to equality of the pair in that respect; a dowry is certainly bestowed with the wife. In the arts and sciences their advance has necessarily been limited, but ingenuity, patience, and skill, are displayed in no common degree in all their performances. Boats, sledges, dresses, implements, and toys, all bear the stamp of careful and suitable adaptation to their several uses.

Regarding their trade and commerce, the system is entirely one of "tok," or barter: they communicate with the Russians at *Kolyma*, and on the *Anadyr*,

and indirectly with the *Esquimaux* of America, by the people of the Diomed Islands, in the straits. There is also some slight communication with the island of St. Lawrence, but enmity exists between its natives and themselves, and more than one proof was afforded that they reduced to bondage any of those people who, on fishing or other excursions, were driven upon their coast; a sufficiently ungenerous proceeding, and one at variance with their general hospitality, but practised probably by way of reprisal.

I have already remarked upon the scantiness of vegetation, from which they have but slight aid except in the subsistence of their reindeer, besides some few roots and a long dry grass, which they plait into hats and baskets of close texture, nearly impervious to water. The only wild animals with which we were acquainted, were bears, wolves, foxes, sable, otters, ermine, hares, the big horn or great sheep of Siberia, and perhaps reindeer; the tame ones were reindeer and dogs; the latter are generally small and shaggy, their bark, or rather yell, is most melancholy, and when a number join in chorus, the wail, particularly at night, is startling, and almost unearthly.

In concluding this portion of my book, I beg to

present to my readers a specimen of Tuski drawing, being in fact my LIKENESS, drawn by Enoch, the Canny lad. Like-most portraits, it is too flattering. •



MY PORTRAIT.

PART II.

BOAT EXPEDITION.



CHAPTER XIV.

Arrive in Kotzebue Sound.—Mosquitos.—First view of Esquimaux.—Joined by “Herald” and “Nancy Dawson.”—Midnight Sun.—Start on a Boat expedition.—Visit of Esquimaux.—Moor to Ice Hummock.—Esquimaux Music and Dancing.—Threatening attitude of Natives.—Burying Ground.—Anchor at Point Barrow.—Language of Signs.—Magnetic Observations.—Description of Natives.—Concert.—Oomiak.—Bury Intelligence.—Whalebone Henge.—Part from “Nancy Dawson.”—Mr. Shedden.

THE effort to despatch the party for search along the coast, was repeated the morning after reaching Kotzebue Sound. Lieutenant Lee, with myself and crews in pinnacé and gig, started at an early hour on the 15th (July), and we had nearly lost sight of the parent “Plover,” when a glimpse of H. M. S. “Herald,” and guns from our own vessel, calling us to return, the resumption of the trip was delayed for a time. The “Herald” had been despatched to replenish our supplies, and otherwise aid in forwarding the objects of our mission; and both ships’ crews

were therefore immediately set to work to transfer stores and provisions. Lieutenant Pullen, who held the original appointment to the "Plover," and had now arrived in the "Herald," exchanged places with Lieutenant Lee, the latter officer going into the "Herald" to join his own ship, the "Asia."

Observations were taken on Chamisso Island, those engaged suffering much from the attacks of musquitos of elephantine proportions. A cask of flour which Captain Beechey, of H. M. S. "Blossom," buried in 1826, was exhumed, and found to be very little deteriorated.

Our first view of Esquimaux was obtained here ; between twenty and thirty men in two baidars (the term now generally used for this species of boat), visiting us on several occasions ; they were quite friendly, though at first rather shy. I believe Lieutenant Cooper and others of the "Herald" remembered some of them, and were recognised with delight in their turn, having met them when the "Herald" sought the "Plover" here at this time last year. They stole nothing, but I am not charitable enough to acquit them of the desire to do so ; subsequent experience forbids so favourable a construction of their intentions.

On the 18th, the "Herald" and "Plover" weighed

at an early hour, and ran out of the anchorage; they were shortly joined by the yacht, "Nancy Dawson," owned and commanded by a noble-hearted man, named Shedden, of whom I shall presently have occasion to speak, in language, 'alas! of mourning as well as of admiration. The three vessels proceeded in company to the northward, along the American shore, until the 25th, when the anchors were dropped off Wainwright Inlet, which it was hoped might be found suitable for the "Plover" to winter in. Only two incidents occurring on our passage hither, will find record in my pages; a view of the midnight sun, which, when seen for the first time, cannot fail to excite new emotions and reflections in the observant mind; and the profusion of life in the waters through which we passed; a midnight watch in a nearly calm night made me a sharer with subdued enjoyment in a scene strange as imposing. Whales near and afar throwing up mighty volumes of water, with a noise like the sobs of a huge steam-engine; walruses and seals innumerable, the former growling and grunting in a peculiar manner, the latter barking much like dogs; eider and other ducks almost in myriads, rising on our approach in clouds from the sea. All this was new and impressive enough.

The two commanders, Kellett and Moore, had resolved to make this the starting point for the oft-tried expedition along the coast, and busy preparations were immediately instituted to that end.

Another pen than mine must record the events in the remainder of the "Plover's" flight; I have to tell of the doings of her bantlings, from which she now separated, and of which enough of interest and adventure may be related.

Four boats were selected for the contemplated service: two of these were large, and capable of containing much provision and stores, and affording great comfort and protection to their crews; but with these I shall have little to do. The other two were whale boats, twenty-seven feet in length and nearly five in breadth, open from bow to backboard, providing therefore no shelter from the weather. Twenty-five persons were comprised in the crews of all these boats, Lieutenant Pullen having command, supported by Mr. Martin and myself. As much provisions as could be carried were stowed away, amounting to more than seventy days' allowance for the whole party, besides twenty cases of pemmican, to be buried along the coast, as depots for any parties of the missing voyagers who might chance upon these shores.

At nearly midnight, three hearty cheers from the crews of the vessels, who manned the riggings to see us away, sounded farewell to our little band. We returned their shouts with energy, and thus, amid waving hands and re-echoing adieus, we proceeded on our mission. The vessels weighed also, and accompanied us for awhile, but a dense fog gathering around, soon hid them from our view, and we were fairly alone to rely upon ourselves. Few points of interest were presented during the first two or three days; walrus were plentiful, dams with a single young one, never more, the old ladies looking grave and sedate as a matron need, the juveniles frolicking about them as only young things can, while here and there an old bull reared his massive but unsightly head, garnished by a pair of tusks of threatening dimensions.

The midnight sun on the 26th glowed like a ball of fire through the haze, and promised little for genial warmth on his rising, and large flocks of wild fowl, principally geese, passed us from time to time, generally going seaward. Early in the morning of the 29th, we observed, on a point near Cape Smythe, seven Esquimaux tents of seal-skin; the inmates were not observable, and we thought them probably asleep or unconscious of our vicinity: not so, however;

before we had proceeded half a mile they crowded the beach, quickly launched their boats, followed and came up with us.. They were very anxious to barter, and delighted to exchange arrows, boots of seal-skin, ornaments of ivory, &c., for scraps of tobacco or a few beads; but they coveted more than all else, any thing of iron, gazing upon it with longing eyes, and we detected an old man endeavouring to appropriate one of the chain-plates of the larger boat (which, for the information of my non-nautical friends, is a heavy piece of iron bolted to the side of the vessel, to secure the shrouds); he seemed much astonished that it resisted his efforts. •

While running hitherward, we had espied a vessel standing in for the land, and speedily recognised the “Nancy Dawson.” We went on in company with her until the afternoon, making, however, but slow progress, as the ice lay thickly in our path, and the boats were finally secured to a heavy hummock of ice which lay aground, and afforded good shelter, the yacht anchoring a little below us. Mr. Shedden had been some distance along the ice-barrier, but found no break nor opening of any kind, so soon returned.

It blew strongly next day, and the wind being contrary, detained us in our position, which was not far from Point Barrow. We were fortunate in

possessing so good shelter, for the sea was covered with drifting ice, mostly heavy, and having some dangerous hummocks amongst it: and the small berg to which we were secured, had to withstand continual pressure and heavy shocks from the wind and current-driven masses.

The "Nancy's" position was less enviable than ours; she was anchored in the full force of the stream, and we more than once feared for her safety, particularly on one occasion, when a small field of ice getting athwart her hawse, threatened to break her from her anchors. Eventually she was warped up to the same shelter as ourselves, and then lay snug enough. From the condition and appearance of the ice, Mr. Pullen came to the conclusion that it would probably be necessary to proceed with the smaller boats only; these were, therefore, loaded with seventy days provisions for fourteen persons, in readiness for a favourable opportunity. Our friendly shelter proved treacherous at last; perhaps we taxed its powers too far by the addition of the "Nancy:" it broke fairly in halves, one part remaining aground, the other floating off with us. We had, therefore, to get in shore as quickly as possible, where such another small berg afforded protection, and we remained here until the evening, when the weather began to moderate, and the

boats pushed on once more. Passing close to the shore, we attracted the notice of about fifty Esquimaux, to whom belonged four tents near; these shouted to us as we ran by, waving their arms and dancing to a drum in a way which forcibly recalled the imitation of their manners by certain among the Tuski, and I saw that no acting could be truer; they accompanied us along the banks for a considerable distance, but did not come off in their boats.

We now began to find the channel much obstructed by ice, and on reaching the southern part of a long narrow promontory, whose northern extreme is Point Barrow, found our progress checked by a large floe, which disputed the right of way and constrained us to tarry a while. The boats were secured to the shore-ice, and our men lay down to sleep. Two or three Esquimaux quickly gathered near with bows in readiness for defence, we also kept our arms at hand, though concealed, and the visitors seeing that no evil was intended discontinued further preparation or precaution, and came without hesitation to receive trifling presents or to barter their furs.

Little was done on the 1st of August, short distances were accomplished with difficulty, sometimes by sailing, at others tracking or towing, in which the Esquimaux readily assisted us, and often we had to

get out upon the ice and force the boats through in various ways, but all was of little use; we got over perhaps three miles by these means, but at last came to the land-floe, which had never moved, and through which, in its present state, there was no hope of passing. It was, however, very much honeycombed, and a great deal of water from the melted snow lay upon it, which gave us good prospects of its speedy disruption. We again secured to the shore, and were visited by the people of twelve tents, which were on the bank a quarter of a mile distant; great numbers assembled around us, noisy and wondering enough, but quite pacific; their visit was returned by an inspection of their tents, which gave them great delight; dancing and drumming were practised as usual, and they were made quite happy by the distribution of presents, the scene ending with a scramble, which was highly diverting. Towards night the floe began to break up and drift away; the channel, to our joy, clearing fast.

The booming of a distant cannon announcing the approach of a vessel from the southward, Mr. Pullen started to meet her, and soon after we saw the spars of the "Nancy" peeping over the southern point.

During the absence of our commander I went on shore to examine the sea to the eastward. In Elson

Bay there was much pack, an occasional piece of sailing ice might be seen, as also the barrier to seaward, but otherwise all was free. Several small inlets were visible along the point, and one or two lagoons. In my walk I came upon a sort of burying-ground; numerous heaps and sods of earth lay about with a stick or two placed in them. I counted six human skulls upon them, but saw no other bones, and from the smallness of the mounds and undisturbed appearance of the surrounding soil, conjectured that the corpses had been buried in an upright position, with their heads at or above the surface. The Esquimaux did not offer me the slightest molestation, and after gathering a few plants and flowers, and picking up a piece of coal, which was probably sea-borne from Cape Beaufort, where it exists in plenty, I returned to the boats.

At four on the morning of the 2nd, Mr. Pullen came on board accompanied by Mr. Shedden, whose vessel had become surrounded by the pack. The channel had cleared for us beautifully, the wind was alike favourable, having veered to the southward, and we were therefore happy enough to hurry on to the northern extreme of Point Barrow, which is also the northernmost point of America. Here we anchored for examination and observation, and Mr. Pullen and

myself started in search of any marks which might have been left by the "Blossom's" boat. We pulled to the southward, and landed to examine a large post, which we had before observed. It was, however, only a piece of driftwood, set up by the natives, many similar to it being about, generally upright. These, as I understood from the Esquimaux, were used as land-marks for their fishing boats. I believe, indeed, that the "Blossom's" boat did not land here, nor leave any mark of their visit. There was certainly none such to be seen. We carefully examined every suspicious object, and dug under several of the posts to a considerable depth.

Our interpreter did not understand the tribe, and again recourse was had to the universal language of signs. We made a rude model of a vessel, and performed sundry antics to signify what we were in search of, but could elicit no information, and so set to work at obtaining observations. We concluded that these people must have been entirely misunderstood. Far from evidencing any disposition to assail or molest us, they were most docile and well-behaved, agreeably disappointing us in their conduct. When we arrived on the hillock, all, big and little, sat down around us, and I amused myself by filling their pipes, becoming a great favourite immediately in consequence.

They had among them a great many knives, which we feared would influence the magnet, Mr. Pullen therefore kindly drew the crowd off to a distance, distributing among them tobacco, beads, snuff, &c. : and much to their credit be it said, there was neither confusion nor contention, each taking his allotted portion, and seeming delighted with his good fortune. They took care not to come near the instruments, finding that we did not like their approach ; one or two indeed came towards us, but retired instantly when laughingly motioned back, and this should be considered as a display of great forbearance, inasmuch as their curiosity must have been highly excited. When the observations were concluded they were allowed to inspect the objects of their wonder ; then fast and thickly to utterance flew their expressions of astonishment at the—to them—novel and splendid instruments. The trough of quicksilver, liquid and restless, especially attracted them, pleasure and wonder were evident at the simple view, but when one or two had permission to take some from the dish, and found it ever elude the grasp, their astonishment knew no bounds.

The men generally were taller than the average of Europeans, strongly built and well formed : some had well-marked features, but all expression was completely

destroyed by those odious labrets, of which some wore but one, others one on each side of the mouth ; they were of beads or stone, and it is incomprehensible how these people can consent to make unsightly gashes in their faces for such a purpose. I estimate them to be of great strength and activity, indeed of the latter sufficient proof was afforded. The women were generally short, the visages of the younger ones tolerably good, but truth compels me to add, that the very reverse was the case with the dames of more advanced age. Their figures inclined to the squat, their mien and expression promised intelligence and good nature. Although both sexes had in most instances the round flat face of the Magolian cast, a few individuals possessed well-defined, though petite features, and all had fine eyes. The women, unlike our lady friends on the Asiatic coast, wore closely fitting breeches of sealskin, and as these always looked old and worn, I have little doubt that they were the castings of their husbands' wardrobes ; their figures were, therefore, not displayed to advantage, particularly as they turned in their toes and walked with a waddle. All were horribly filthy in person and habits ; a perceptible odour of train-oil pervaded the assembly, and effectually banished on our side any lingering penchant for their caresses, which were however freely

tendered, particularly the nose-rubbing salutation which we had some difficulty to avoid without offending. The men only appear to wear the labret, and where a single one is borne it is generally on the left side of the mouth. I observed some men with bare crowns in priestly fashion, but the major part left the hair untouched: the reason for the practice of clipping may be better guessed than alluded to. I saw no tattooed marks on the men: in the women all discernible were lines, generally in pairs, drawn from the lower lip to the chin; they were of a dark hue and deeply punctured; indeed, in some instances the flesh had risen up in ridges. The women's hair was cut in front level with the eyebrows; behind, it grew long, and was gathered into two "rat tails," such as young ladies sometimes wear in England, but being very thick and bound tightly round with strips of stiff hide, they stuck out on each side like small cable ends, which indeed they much resembled. Having concluded the observations, and erected a pole on the spot where they were taken, we went off to the boats to dine. The Esquimaux assembled on the beach opposite to us, and commenced a festival concert, singing, dancing, and gesticulating, to the sound of two large native drums or tambourines, very like those of the Tuski; the burthen of their song was ever—Hi, Yangah

yangah ; ha ha, yangah : with variety only in the inflection of voice.

We purchased an oomiak—woman's, or family boat—made of two walrus skins, sewn together, and stretched tightly over a light wooden frame: with paddles complete its price was a large butcher's knife, a looking-glass, and a quantity of tobacco and beads. She differed much in shape from those of the Tuski, which are little wider at top than bottom ; this one measured seventeen inches at the greatest breadth of floor, and forty-three where widest between the gunwales ; a species of keel was formed by carrying the woodwork to an edge below. Workmanship was displayed in the manufacture of her frame which would not have disgraced a skilful carpenter ; it was particularly neat and well fitted, which made it much stronger than its lightness would lead one to suppose.

In the afternoon we went on shore to bury an account of our past and intended future proceedings ; these were placed near the pole, which was about twenty feet long, with a cross-piece near the top, on which was inscribed—

PLOVER'S BOATS.

AUGUST 2, 1849.

INTELLIGENCE, 10 FEET, N.E.

Mr. Shedden surprised us at this time by appearing

on the hill near, wishing to take a last look of us, and learn if we wanted any further assistance ; for these purposes he had walked a considerable distance from his vessel, which was still icelocked. In the evening I went on shore to obtain some rope of seal or walrus hide, which I knew would be valuable for towing the boats. I was perfectly unarmed, and had some distance to walk to the village, but met only with the most friendly demonstrations. I took a good visual survey of the place, which appeared to be a considerable and important settlement. The winter dwellings were about thirty in number, and apparently partly made by excavation in the soil, some square or oblong in shape with flattish roofs, others round and arched ; they averaged about five feet from the ground. I could not help thinking that these must be what Simpson in his narrative mistook for " numerous mounds of earth, forced up by the pressure of the ice, which look, at a distance, like gigantic boulders." They have much of that appearance, and I coincided with his belief, until I had a tolerably near inspection, which made me pretty confident that such mounds do not exist, and these dwellings seem too far distant from the sea to be in danger from ice. The summer tents were about as numerous as the huts, and pitched near and about them either singly or in small clusters ; they were

of seal-skin, sewn together, with the hair outwards, bell-shaped, and supported by poles. One, which I entered, was entirely destitute of any kind of furniture; its inmates sat on the loose earth, but had of course skins to sleep on.

The most remarkable peculiarity of Point Barrow is the numerous poles and ribs of whales which are erected on it, about the settlement. I tried to count them, but became utterly confused in the calculation before reaching a tithe of the number. I should think there must be upwards of a thousand. Some were placed so as to form a sort of scaffold, others in rows, and a few isolated; their use was evident, although I fancied there were infinitely more than required. On those arranged together were placed oomiaks and kiaks (the latter very like our "funnies," or wager boats, but of hide, and covered all over with a hooped aperture for the single occupant), skins, dresses, entrails of whales and seals, &c., and between the solitary ribs were stretched quantities of hide rope in different stages of curing. I imagined that each member of the community had his own private lot or manufactory, for on signifying my desire to become a purchaser, I was seized by one of the merchants and conducted right through the village to its outskirts, where his property and

winter dwelling were situated, his summer tent being more centrally deposited.

The soil is peaty and boggy in some parts, marshy in others, and all was now saturated with moisture; the beach was shelving, composed of sand and shingle; few shells were to be found, and those all scraps and fragments.

In addition to the hide rope, I purchased a wooden mask, which was a ludicrous imitation of the "human face divine," in the Esquimaux variety. During the day we had bartered for many other curious trifles, skin dresses of all kinds, from the nicely trimmed frock of fawn to less inviting breeks of seal-skin, labrets and other ornaments, bones and such like of walrus ivory.

At nearly midnight on the 3rd, our kind friend Shedden bade us adieu, as we started from Point Barrow. We gave him three hearty cheers, and parted with feelings of regret, which would have been much increased had we known that this was our last farewell. This generous man, who with noble self-disregard had adventured thus far into these dreary regions to seek the gallant Franklin and his band, with no other hope of reward than the approval of his own conscience, and who, finding that he could not expect to proceed much further, placed all his

means at our disposal, for, as he told me, “he would take his mainmast out if it would do us any good ;” this noble fellow, after striving for awhile longer amid great difficulties, perished before he could return to his native land. We mourn for thee, gallant Shedden, as men should mourn for a true patriot !

CHAPTER XV.

Take to Whale-boats and Oomiak.—Return of Mr. Martin and larger Boats to the Ship.—Dog Sledges.—Smith's Bay.—Heavy Sea.—Run for Shore.—Repair Damages.—Birds in numbers.—Colville Shoals.—Critical position.—Throw over Provisions.—Point Berens.—Amber.—Shovel Jack.—Attitude of Natives.—Mirage.—Jones's Islands.—Esquimaux Chief fires a Musket.—Native Boats crowd us.—Point Beechey.—Visited by Esquimaux.—Prudential Preparations.—Shovel Jack again.—Treacherous demonstrations.—Re-embark.—Natives follow.—Return Reef.—Fire with Ball.—Construct Stockade.—Marine charges with Bayonet.—Close of the three days' demonstrations.—Natives depart.—Breakfast on the Ice.—Natives reappear.—Discharge their Arrows.—Reasons for forbearance.

WE ran on until the afternoon of the 3rd, when we stopped near Fatigue Point, in latitude $71^{\circ} 6' N.$, longitude $254^{\circ} 31' W.$, and made preparations to divide the party, Mr. Pullen having definitively concluded to proceed with the whale boats and oomiak, and send the two large ones back. He named one of our little craft, "Louisa;" I had the much esteemed privilege of bestowing on the other the title of "Logan," and the skin canoe was aptly christened "Supply." She relieved the other boats much, stowing a large quantity both in weight and

bulk, twenty cases of pemmican, eight hundred pounds of biscuit, a quantity of preserved meats, and other miscellaneous matters, the whole amounting to upwards of half a ton weight, with which her gun-wales were still eight inches above the water. Twelve men were selected to accompany Mr. Pullen and myself, and it may well be imagined that fourteen men with their arms, baggage—the latter need not be too highly estimated—instruments, and provisions for nearly a hundred days, were not a light lading for our tiny vessels; we were indeed very “deep,” but consoled ourselves with the reflection that each day would diminish the weight.

At midnight of the 4th, the word to depart was given, the chosen party bade farewell to their less fortunate comrades, and our adieux were made with mutual regret. My dear friend Mr. Martin we particularly sympathised with; he had so much hoped to have pushed on, and was greatly chagrined at the disappointment. As we ran along the shore, great quantities of drift-wood were observable, and on a point above high-water mark were several clumsy dog-sledges of the Esquimaux, some perfect, others much injured; they had apparently been left there by travelling parties in the spring, when the snow had become too soft to employ them, and

would probably be reclaimed for next winter's use. A rough hut of drift wood had also been thrown up near.

Getting into Smith's Bay, we found the water very shallow, and the beach muddy; and after tracking for a time with difficulty, started to go right across the bay. The banks here were of solid ice, ten or fifteen feet high, with a crust of decayed vegetable matter, changed below into fine black mould. We had not gone far in our run, when the wind, previously strong, increased greatly; the sea became boisterous, and our boats shipped much water; the "Supply," in particular, being within an ace of sinking. Part of her lading was transferred to the other boats; but they could ill bear the additional weight; and to prevent more disastrous consequences, we were obliged to run for the shore, landing in a horrid mixture of black stuff, into which we sunk to the knees, the surf breaking over the boats. With much labour they were cleared of their contents, and hauled up, but not before everything, including ourselves, was well drenched. Particularly cold and miserable we were; for, in the first place, there was great difficulty in pitching the tents, as the pegs, when through the spongy surface, which was not more than four or five inches deep,

refused to enter the icy foundation ; next, the fire-wood being wet and rotten, would not be persuaded to burn for a long time ; and lastly, our very scanty wardrobes being as well soaked as the clothes we had on, required a little draining before we could enjoy the luxury of a change. Next day all our attention was required in repairing, as far as possible, the evils of the preceding. Nearly all our biscuit was in a pap-like state of saturation, and we constructed a rude oven with anchors, rods, and plates of tin from the preserved potato-cases, in which to dry it ; but this expedient was only very partially successful ; the effects of the salt water were not easily removed ; and our bakery, it must be confessed, was not of the most artistic description. Our camp presented a strange spectacle : the tents all askew, near them a large pile of rotten wood, intended for a fire, but boasting more of pungent smoke ; on one side the primitive oven ; around, preserved meat-tins, piled like shot ; casks, oars, masts, and other gear ; and suspended upon lines, dripping habiliments waved in the breeze. Crowning all, were the fantastic garbs of the party ; some had donned Esquimaux frocks, breeches or caps ; the rest of their dress being of a more civilised cast ; others, with some misappropriated garment thrown loosely over them, were

awaiting, in patience, until the sulky fire should dry their clothes; and one or two, of an ingenious *turn*, assumed the position of a roast, revolving slowly before the logs; they certainly got well smoked, if heat were wanting. We could not afford to spend more time in repairing our losses, and resumed the voyage on the 7th, at noon. There was a good deal of "sailing" ice in our course, and we got one or two hard rubs in consequence. Ice which has much wasted is very deceptive; long tongues run out under the water, and are dangerous, because unseen. Near Point Pitt were seven Esquimaux tents, and we landed, to communicate with the inmates, but gained no intelligence: they could hardly have ever seen whites before, as more than common astonishment was displayed at sight of us. We obtained some fish from them, and experienced great annoyance from the oft-repeated salutation of nose-rubbing, which made us glad enough to depart. The shores here were low, the ground chiefly flat and swampy. Ducks, geese, and gulls, were observed in great numbers, and multitudes of small birds kept up a continual twitter. Landing to examine a very small sandy island near Point Ellice, we were joined by two oomiaks, and recognised in their crews some of the persons we had

lately left. Endeavours were made to purchase one of their boats, but without success. Near Point Cameron, where we encamped at night, thousands of loons and diving-ducks were assembled, but were very shy; and an enormous white owl, which I endeavoured to get a shot at, was far too wary for my success. The best way to catch these birds is to trail some small object like a mouse at a long distance behind by a string. Landing on Cape Halkett on the morning of the 9th, it was resolved, as the day was calm, to push for the opposite point of Harrison's Bay, and we started accordingly. We had much difficulty in threading our way through the floating and grounded ice, but were assisted in our advance by a strong easterly current. Late in the afternoon a breeze came up from the south-west, to which we hoisted sail. Wind and sea gradually increased to violence; the boats grounded on shoals at the mouth of the Colville River, and were with difficulty got into deeper water, where their condition was equally unfortunate: the poor little craft were in great danger of swamping, being too deeply laden to rise with sufficient buoyancy to the waves. Much water was shipped, particularly by the "Supply," which being in tow embarrassed us considerably. Our situation became critical, and the boats were of necessity

lightened by throwing overboard some of the provisions ; this relieved them ; and the beach near Point Berens was reached with great satisfaction soon after, when the work of clearing the boats had to be repeated, everything being again quite saturated. The " Supply " was much injured, and we had thrown overboard about three hundred pounds of biscuit, and nearly two hundred pounds of preserved potatoes, all of which had been wetted on the former occasion ; a ten gallon cask of water had also been sacrificed. Walking along the beach, I picked up a piece of amber, which, although very small, was treasured as a curiosity from being found here. On the 11th, having somewhat refitted, we pulled up to Point Berens, on which were thirteen tents, containing, as I calculated, about one hundred persons in all. Pemmican was to be deposited here, and a pole with four arms, which our carpenter had already prepared, was erected. To conceal our doings, a visit was made to the tents, which lay at a distance ; and the attention of the natives being thus diverted, three cases and a bottle of intelligence were buried, we hoped, without observation, and fires made at different places around, to mislead as to the position of the depot. Our arrangements concluded, we were preparing to depart, when the shovel was

missed ; a native gentleman had cleverly shuffled it in an instant under the sand with his feet ; and had he not been by chance observed, would undoubtedly have appropriated it as a waif. We could not spare the implement, so dislodged the thief from his position over it, and recovered the article ; but our friend was not satisfied with his deprivation, and seized the prow of the boat to prevent our departure, while his companions seemed much inclined to make a rush upon us. One must be ever watchful and prompt in communication with uncivilised people : a couple of guns were levelled at the man in an instant, and their aspect quickly changed his views ; he let go of the boat and retreated hastily. We hoisted sail and ran along shore, until a mark was observed, which we landed to examine, and while so engaged, were visited by an oomiak, containing twenty-four men, and only one woman. As they came from Point Berens we distrusted their honesty, and a line was therefore drawn on the sand between the parties, as a Rubicon to each.

A curious instance of the deceptive effect of mirage occurred to-day : we thought we saw a small vessel or boat running in for the land, and chased it for a time, but after all, found it to be only a mass of ice, and continued our way with considerable vexation.

The oomiak followed us for some time at a distance, but we lost sight of it before landing on the easternmost of Jones's Islands, where we supped, and the men lay down for a time, as we intended to proceed during the night. A party of natives visited us here; they seemed very friendly, and pleased to see us. Among them was a tall, spare man, who, by his usurping the principal share in the conversation, and other tokens, appeared to be a chief. He had a long gun, of English manufacture: the name on the lock was Barnet: it was very shaky; but, notwithstanding, evidently highly prized.* He obtained a little powder upon solicitation, and a few presents, of which tawacah (tobacco) was most welcome, were as usual distributed to the rest of the party. He was permitted to fire one of the fowling-pieces, for we wanted to see how far his knowledge of the use of firearms extended; and his proceeding caused much amusement: he kneeled down in the sand, shut his eyes, and compressed his lips firmly; and after a slight pause, during which he was doubtless resolving upon the performance of the great achievement, pulled the trigger, and received a smart tap, having held the gun loosely from the shoulder. Mightily

* We have since been informed that this gun was lost from Sir G. Back's boats in 1826.

was he relieved when the exploit was concluded, and, with his companions, breathed freely once more; for they, like him, had been in all-engrossing suspense until the deed was done. Our usual endeavours to obtain intelligence were employed; a rude model of a vessel again constructed, and with other signs put in requisition; but these efforts were unrewarded by success. This occupation was interrupted by the approach of a number more of the natives, which warned us that our position on this narrow strip of sand was easily assailable, in case of treachery. We re-embarked, therefore, at thirty minutes past eleven, P.M., and pulled to the eastward, for the wind had disappointed our expectations, and instead of becoming fair, threatened to blow strongly from the north-east. We speedily observed four large oomiaks, filled with natives, who had apparently come from two goodly collections of tents, one on the point of the mainland abreast of us, the other, and larger, a little to the eastward. The five oomiaks crowded upon us much nearer than was agreeable, for they contained quite five times our number. Mr. Pullen counted twenty-one men and two women in one, and estimated that none of the rest held less than sixteen persons. Our three boats were kept close together, and the advances of the strangers

discouraged: they did not seem to comprehend nor to relish our reserve. When they found that we would not stop for them, nor accept their very pressing invitations to land at the larger encampment, on passing it, they gave up convoying us, and returned to their tents, it being now long past midnight. The wind had, as we feared, increased greatly, raising the sea also; and so little progress was made, that the boats' heads were turned to shore, and we landed at nearly three, A.M., on the 12th, near Point Beechy. Half of the party lay down to sleep; the rest re-loaded the fire-arms, which had nearly all become wetted from the quantity of water shipped; for it must be remembered that our boats were so small, and moreover, so heavily laden, that they were quite unprotected from the most trifling sea or spray, and were unsafe in a breeze. We had not been here long when a large number of the natives came along the bank from their camp, which was about two miles distant from our position. Although they had apparently no weapons, we thought it necessary to be on our guard, and as on a former occasion, drew a line along the sand, across which they were not permitted to pass. We were, indeed, soon rendered still more cautious by observing among the crowd the man who had given us some trouble at

Point Berens, and whom, in reference to the object of his desire on that occasion, our men had christened "Shovel Jack." He evidently wished to remain incognito, sitting very quietly among a group of men, and being disguised by a pair of snow spectacles, which were made of wood, and had a narrow slit lengthwise for vision. But we recognised him, notwithstanding, and suspected mischief accordingly. Foremost in the crowd was the tall man who visited us on the preceding night : his gun, which his wife now carried, was the only weapon visible. For a time the natives remained quiet, and seated themselves contentedly around ; but the tall man at last became impatient of the restraint imposed by us, and crossed the boundary line ; he was speedily re-conducted to his own side of the border with the most scrupulous politeness, which was unfortunately not sufficiently appreciated by the native noble ; he re-crossed the line, and commenced to importune for powder. A little tobacco was given to him, but this was not satisfactory, and he walked off with a number of his men, apparently in dudgeon, I thought for good, but, as we soon found, for no good. A preconcerted scheme became immediately manifest : in a few seconds they were armed with bows and arrows, which they had hidden near, and advanced

upon us, the rest of the Esquimaux doing the same. The scene was now becoming slightly exciting, and preparations were instituted for our departure, but with as little appearance of hurry as possible. When all was ready, we retired slowly to the boats, and embarking, pushed off as quickly as might be. We were very nearly exchanging missiles, however; for instantly that we quitted the beach the Esquimaux mounted on the bank above and prepared to shoot; but as we did likewise, they hesitated probably, to reconsider the propriety of an attack. One young man, in particular, looked very fierce, and with his bent bow and fitted arrow was plainly taking aim at our leader, whose life just then would have cost a heavy premium for insurance; but the ambitious warrior was quickly "covered" by five barrels, which cooled his ardour in an instant, and he dropped down under shelter of the bank. "Jack of the shovel" was particularly singled out for one of the first victims of the expected skirmish: many fingers itched to draw trigger upon him; and this is not to be wondered at, for this man had evidently followed on our trail, and by a description of our riches, and the smallness of our number, incited the rest to attempt to plunder, and probably to kill us.

I counted eighty-four or eighty-five men on the

bank ; the women, of whom, indeed, there had not been many present, and those probably only as a blind, had quickly withdrawn, when matters became serious. Our great difficulty in gaining the boats was caused by the shallowness of the water, and we lost our anchors partly in consequence of this, as time was not spared to haul up to them. The strong breeze still continuing, we regained the Return Reef, landed, and buried three cases of pemmican ; we had barely concluded, when three boats full of natives having crossed from the village, landed also about half a mile off, and came down towards us, keeping to windward, that their arrows might fly truly. We did not, however, give opportunity for a display of their skill, but re-embarked, and pulled away, first firing a shot over their heads. The whistling ball made them wince and hesitate a little, but they became emboldened by perceiving that it had done no damage. This manœuvre is perhaps more injurious than beneficial in its effect upon savages, as they ascribe its harmless result rather to want of skill or ability than to an intimation of the possession of means of aggression or defence. As soon as we had embarked, the Esquimaux regained, and launched their oomiaks : with their light boats it was no difficult matter to keep up with our deeply-immersed

craft, and they hung upon our skirts, always keeping to windward, and seeking a chance to attack.

An hour's severe labour showed the vanity of contending against a strong breeze, heavy sea, and loose pack, and the resolution was made to return to the Reef; and should the Esquimaux persist in molesting us, no longer to withhold their chastisement. Turning about accordingly, we were not long in reaching the shore, and landing on the seaward side, hauled the boats up. Quantities of drift-wood lay around; of this a stockade was constructed, behind which half the party lay down to sleep,—for repose was sadly needed—the remainder being on watch. The Esquimaux landed, also, and threw up a breastwork, at about five hundred yards distance, from behind which they intently watched our proceedings, but did not dare to advance in face of the fire-arms. They made treacherous signals of amity, and erected a skin frock on a pole, as an invitation to barter and fraternise, but we were not to be so easily deluded.

By and by two natives ventured to approach, making all sorts of friendly gestures, but timid enough under the mask; for when about two hundred yards distant, they were sent to the right-about in an instant by Sullock, the sentinel-marine, who charged

them with fixed bayonet, and they scampered back in haste to their defences and companions.

In four hours the besiegers wearied of watching, and fearing to try our position by assault, raised the blockade, and took to their boats, very much to our satisfaction. Two oomiaks went over to the village opposite, the third, which doubtless contained the redoubtable and never sufficiently to be execrated "Shovel Jack," and his associates, pulling away to the westward. When pretty well reposed, Mr. Pullen and I walked down to the spot where the pemmican was buried, and found it untouched. As we neared the encampment on return, some of the seamen came running towards us, exclaiming hastily that a sail was in sight, and pointing to seaward, where, indeed, something much resembling a vessel appeared, and the "Nancy Dawson" was suggested, but a few seconds sufficed to undeceive us; the object shifted its position, and presenting a new phase, showed us that it was but a tall hummock of ice, of peculiar form.

The morning of the 13th was favourable for our departure from our fortress unobserved; a thick haze overspread the sea, under cover of which we embarked at two, A.M., and pulled to windward out to the pack. Passing some very heavy and extensive

floes, we *landed* upon one which lay aground, moored the boats with the pickaxe, the only substitute for an anchor we possessed, and cooked breakfast with spirits of wine. Well drenched with spray, exposed to the biting blast, with the temperature below freezing, and our only footing ice, it will not be doubted that, as a simple question of inconvenience, our discomfort this morning was very great; and, to increase the wretchedness of our condition, a large submerged tongue of ice broke off from the floe, and rising up under the boats, well-nigh capsized them, and much wetted us. After drinking our cocoa, which, in our benumbed state, was perfect nectar, we embarked the pickaxe and ourselves, and resumed the oars, until the wind became favourable enough to permit of hoisting sail. Among the pack some large and high hummocks were observable; the haze rendered their outlines undefined, and some curious appearances were presented: one mass, in particular, looked like a huge pile of gothic architecture.

Soon after noon we landed on the Return Reef, near its eastern extreme, to dine and dry our clothes; the spray and drizzle having drenched all thoroughly. Plenty of driftwood lay around, and we speedily raised a huge fire, cooked and dispatched dinner, and with reinvigorated spirits, were preparing to proceed,

when we saw two oomiaks, containing between forty and fifty men, pulling in to the beach: These landed as we pushed off, and ran along the strand towards our resting-place, preparing their bows as they came, and discharging their arrows with great rapidity at the sternmost boat: only one arrow fell ahead of the boat, the rest dropped short, but were beautifully aimed. We fired the fowling-pieces with ball, first over, and then at them, for the annoyance had now been so long continued, that we were vexed: but I do not think any one was hit. They cut some ludicrous capers on the occasion, dancing and jumping about, to divert our aim, and dropping, like dead men, the instant they observed the flash. Having got beyond the range of their arrows, sail was made upon the boats, and we had a fine run until past midnight, passing Points Chandos and Anxiety, and landing to encamp about two miles to the eastward of Foggy Island, seeing no ice throughout.

We were not again molested by the Esquimaux; and I think it but right to conclude my relation of their hostile proceedings with two or three remarks on conduct in communication with uncivilised people. The reasons for desiring to avoid collision, and the great forbearance displayed on our part during the late attacks, particularly deserve notice. Setting

aside the utter uselessness of risking injury or death to either side, it must be obvious that a sanguinary result could only have excited vindictive feelings, which, in case any of Franklin's or other party should afterwards be thrown on the coast, probably in a reduced condition, would surely find vent in their destruction. But it must, on the other hand, be confessed that the usual moderation of the whites has inspired the Esquimaux with contempt for their courage, rather than a correct estimation of their motives. It is most unwise unnecessarily to expose to their view trinkets and implements, which have in their eyes an almost inestimable value, and cannot fail to excite their cupidity. Had our possessions been more guardedly veiled at Point Berens, I feel persuaded we should never have been subjected to the late annoyance. Firmness and unfailing vigilance are indispensable to security: never should the slightest wavering from an original resolution be displayed, nor should distrust ever be apparent, though it must also be particularly noticed that treachery lurks in every act of the Esquimaux, they are not to be confided in for an instant; and it should always be remembered that the adage, "too much familiarity breeds contempt," is peculiarly appropriate as regards communication with unenlightened tribes.

The more they have reason to respect visible powers, the greater will be the mist of awe thrown around uncomprehended properties.

We passed a most refreshing night of repose after the late harassing period of two days, and arose reinvigorated for new toil.

Going in search of water, and to examine a mark on a hillock near, we discovered a spot where Esquimaux had lately encamped; the remains of a fire and débris of a feast on reindeer and wildfowl were visible, and four or five very small three-legged stools, to which we never again saw anything similar.

CHAPTER XVI.

Lion Reef.—Seals.—Mountains.—Ducks and Divers.—Daily routine.—Flaxman's Island.—Ice.—Large Drift Wood.—Bury Pemmican.—Dog Seen.—Native Huts.—Presents.—Ethnographic distinctions.—European Knife.—Send up Rockets.—Native wonder.—Oomiaks' mimic manœuvres.—Esquimaux Family.—Whales.—Herschel Island.—Wind shifts suddenly.—Difficulties.—Calton Point.—Esquimaux bring Fish.—Tracking.—Paradoxical Barrows.—Land near Sabine Point.—Huts and Women.—Buy a frock from a Lady.—Thefts.—Compasses affected.—Approach to Mackenzie.—Tracking up River.—Change in Vegetation.—Bear and Deer Tracks.—Erect a Cross.—Indian visitor.—Peel River.—Mr. Hardisty visits us.—Proceed to Fort M'Pherson.—Changed phase of existence.—Departure of Mr. Pullen.—Annual Despatch.—Indian Paint and Decoration.—Loucheux or Quarrellers.—Rat Indians.—Gluttony.—Indian Betrothals.—Forty skins for one.—Indian Currency.—Esquimaux and Indian Feuds.

ON the Lion Reef, where we slept on the night of the 14th, a multitude of seals were collected, so perfectly still, that in the dusk we at first mistook them for driftwood; but their tumultuous rush into the water on our approach, enlightened us as to their vitality. We observed the Romanzoff Mountains from this place, which is island and reef combined: they are apparently about thirty miles from the sea, their spurs extending far into the plains around. A rise and fall of tide amounting to eighteen inches,

occurred in the night, the current setting strongly to the westward, with the wind fresh from north-east; and may here remark, "en passant," that our experience along this coast led us to consider the currents, as mainly governed by the wind. I do not recollect a single "weather tide."

Between this island and the main land we were unable to find a passage, and were obliged to pass outside, where a good deal of heavy sailing ice was in motion. The number of ducks and diving-birds seen for the last two or three days truly astonished us, but they were so wild, that we could kill but few. Immense quantities of driftwood lay along the shores, much of it of large size, and nearly all very straight. The coast line where not very low, was generally composed of banks of mud and ice, with a surface of about eighteen inches or two feet of peaty stuff, elastic and spongy.

The routine of one day's work on this coasting trip was very much a sample of the rest: sometimes we pulled separately, or in line tacked on to each other; sailed when we could, of course, never removing far from the shore, in scarcely any instance beyond two or three miles; and landing, generally to take meals, and as much oftener as numerous marks upon the shore called for examination. The most trivial signs

were scrupulously regarded; and had any strange party been on this coast, we could not have failed to discover them. With only one or two exceptions, we always slept on shore, for it may be easily guessed that our boats afforded little space or convenience for repose; and as until the middle of August we had constant daylight, that during the night-hours being very much like the gloom of smoky old London in a mist, it would not have been easy for us to have passed any animate objects unobserved or unobserved.

Flaxman's Island, which was reached on the 16th, appears, when approached from the westward, high and bold; but this is the character of the eastern part only; its western extreme is little higher than the "Lion," and encompassed by small spits and shoals. We landed in the afternoon on a nice gravelly beach at the eastern end, where cliffs about forty feet high rise abruptly from it, and on the summit of which was found a human skull, and other bones. The pack, which was heavy, lay close down upon the northern shore of the island, the channel between which and the main was also much crowded with drift ice. Camden Bay, as viewed from the top of the cliff, appeared to be completely blocked up with ice, and we were somewhat apprehensive of a stoppage; but

considerable labour in pulling and pushing through the ice, brought us to a clear though narrow lane of water, close to the beach. We saw here, I think, more ice than at any other period during our journey ; as far as the eye could range to seaward, nought else was visible, and all varieties were presented—the brash, or broken-up ice ; the floe, smooth and flat, and often many acres in extent ; and the tall ragged hummocks, of picturesque outline, bergs in miniature. Frequent loud reports broke upon the stillness, and startled the ear, as masses rent asunder ; the sounds, with their reverberating echoes, resembling the rumbling of far-off thunder, or booming of distant cannon.

We were unable to reach the beach this evening, owing to the shallowness of the water, and secured to a grounded floe with the faithful pickaxe, which had deservedly received promotion to an acting-order as anchor. Having hauled the boats close together, the sails were spread above, the kitchen was established upon the ice, and we reposed with sufficient comfort until rudely disturbed by an under-tongue of ice ; which breaking away, floated up under the boats, lifted them out of the water, and threw them on their broadsides. With some difficulty we got rid of the unwelcome intruder, and soon snoozed again. It cost little trouble to raise camp next morning, and

we pushed on to Boulder Island to breakfast, the ice having happily drifted off shore during the night. Here, amongst quantities of drift timber, was a straight trunk, full eighty feet in length, and ten in circumference at its base. Proceeding onwards, eight tents, and a hut of driftwood, were espied upon the shore, but, strange to say, no natives appeared: we did not halt to examine them, but pushed on with a light breeze, and reaching Barter Island late at night, landed and encamped.

I should think that Barter Island is in the winter time much overlaid by ice; its shelving, shingly shore would yield to the enormous pressure of a gale-driven pack.

Three cases of pemmican were buried on the 18th, on a small island near Manning Point, and a cross erected, with directions to search at ten feet distance, north-east, where information was deposited. Near Humphrey's Point, on the morning of the 20th, four tents were seen, from which a couple of dozen natives came forth to gaze; but being under sail, we could not linger here. We landed near Icy Reef in the afternoon to dine, and observed several huts, loosely constructed of rods and driftwood, except one or two, which were more compactly built, and had possibly served as winter dwellings. In one of

these I found a quantity of knife-shavings, some small wooden fish for decoys and floats, and the still live embers of a fire; we had also seen a dog on landing; and this, in connection with the fire, indicated that natives could not be far off, if, indeed, our appearance had not put them to flight. These conjectures were correct: in a short time we saw a number of Esquimaux in two oomiaks, and made signs to them to return; but they were evidently too timid to approach.

As they had seen us enter the huts, I judged it probable that they would venture thither to seek the result of our visit, so drew a hieroglyphic epistle upon a piece of board, and placed it, with a few beads and scraps of tobacco, inside, then departed to a distance, where our men were preparing dinner. Presently we saw one or two creeping stealthily towards the huts, and soon afterwards they came to us without distrust, doubtless assured of our good intentions by the discovery of the trifling deposits we had left, and which they now brought with them. The "entente cordiale" was perfected by a distribution of presents, and we engaged in a very animated, but unproductive conversation respecting the objects of our search, which they had clearly seen nothing of.

The women of this party wore their hair in a mode quite different to that we had before seen ; it was disposed at the back of the head in two immense bows, which we found to contain a quantity of loose hair, to increase their size ; nor can I say that either these or their dusky owners were of prepossessing appearance. The men were of slighter figure than those about Point Barrow, but evidently possessed great activity and endurance of fatigue : they wore their hair long, and flowing far over their shoulders. One of them had a broad and short double-edged knife, on which the names of "I. and H. Sorby" were imprinted : this must have been obtained by barter from the Indians, as it was of the kind called dagues, supplied by the Hudson's Bay Company to those people. We quitted our new friends after dinner, but could only reach the northern end of the reef that night, principally in consequence of a dense fog occurring. Our encampment was very soon surrounded by a crowd of Esquimaux, of the same appearance as our visitors of the morning ; they were, however, probably from their numbers, less timorous, and, indeed, troubled us much, being evidently not disinclined to appropriate any stray article. The "Supply," at first, created great suspicion of our integrity, as it was intimated that we

had probably obtained her by undue, and, possibly, violent means : this doubt was, however, speedily cleared up by our signs and representations, and, more than all, the display and distribution of beads, tobacco, and knives, with which also we purchased fish, which they had in plenty. Our visitants gradually increased to a considerable number ; and as they encroached upon the defined boundaries of our camp, two rockets were sent up, ostensibly to divert, but really in the hope of frightening the natives off to a less dangerous proximity. Hugely astonished and delighted they were ; and expressed their sensations in a rapid flow of speech, grimace, and gesticulation ; but they did not draw off to a distance, notwithstanding ; and unwilling to display the natural anxiety attendant on the encircling of our slender band by so large a number of strangers, whose intentions we were quite ignorant of, the precaution was taken, instead, of doubling the sentinels, and impressing upon them the necessity of great vigilance. These Esquimaux made some signs which, coupled with the frequent use of the word "mah-no-lah" (white man), led us to conjecture that they saw the expedition of Dease and Simpson, but of this we could not be confident.

The next morning (21st) we proceeded on our

journey. The good folks collected round five tents near our resting-place, which belonged to some of them, to bid us farewell; and five men launching their tiny and beautiful kiacs, accompanied us for a while, the light vessels, propelled by a double-bladed paddle, dancing over the rippling waves light as a gossamer, and keeping pace with us with perfect ease, although we were favoured by a light breeze, and used both oars and sail. Two of these men continued with us for a considerable time, and amused us greatly by their proceedings. They frequently darted their fish-spears, or harpoons, at imaginary prey, to demonstrate the mode of using them: these spears were about a yard long, of thin drift-wood, with double or triple barbs of ivory: they were thrown from a hand-board, into which they fitted in a socket, and had a bladder attached to keep them afloat in the water, the hunter picking them up with great ease as he passed rapidly onwards in his canoe. We landed to dine at about noon, and were shortly joined by the family of one of our friends, who had hailed his spouse when passing the spot where his tent was pitched. In a very short time they had struck the tent: this, with themselves and household gods, now filled their oomiak, which was laden to the gunwale. Soon a number more of the natives arrived in single

and family boats, the latter all laden like the first oomiak, the party being apparently about to change their locality ; for in summer their existence is entirely nomadic ; they migrate from place to place as caprice or convenience suggests. A little bartering was carried on between us, but we only remained on shore long enough to cook dinner, then pushed off from the land, and drifted slowly onward under reduced sail, to eat our meal in peace ; nevertheless, this was not altogether permitted ; the Esquimaux embarked at the same time ; the women and children going up in-shore in the oomiaks, the men in their kiaks, to the number of a dozen or more, keeping company with ourselves, cruising round and about us, and displaying, as before, mimicry of chase and combat. They quitted us only when the freshening breeze impelled our craft more rapidly than the pace of the deeply-laden oomiaks, which they then rejoined. Two whales were seen during the afternoon, and later, a goodly collection of tents, with about two hundred natives, assembled near : these shouted lustily, and danced and sung with energy, hoping, by these and other artifices, to induce us to land, of which, however, time did not admit. The wind from west became strong towards evening, and, as was always the case, the sea quickly rose, upon its

increase. To obtain a few bearings of Herschel Island, and objects on the mainland, we ran under the lee of the pack, which was very solid, consisting of floe-pieces, two or three square miles in area, and ten or twelve feet thick. Two reefs were now taken in the sails, a reduction the force of wind had rendered necessary; but the sea "followed" so fast, that we ran some danger of swamping, and shortly encamped for the night under the lee of a long spit, which formed part of one of the small islands between that of Herschel and the continent. The small tent only was pitched for Mr. Pullen and myself, the seamen taking up their quarters in a deserted Esquimaux hut. The ice met with to-day was heavier than any before encountered; it lay close into and upon the north-western shores of Herschel Island, with large floes and loose masses driving rapidly to the eastward. Early on the 22nd a new disaster occurred: the wind shifted suddenly to the south-west, to which quarter only our position was exposed. The boats were driven broadside on to the beach, and instantly filled. This misfortune did more injury than any of the previous, as the instruments, and our only luxuries, consisting of a few small stores, were completely immersed, and became considerably diminished; salt, pepper, mustard, sago,

and arrowroot, were in solution; and the contents of the medicine-chest would have required careful analysis to determine their respective quantities. With much labour, and many duckings, the boats were cleared, and all but irretrievable damages repaired; and by seven, we had launched and re-loaded the boats. The wind was still very strong when we embarked, requiring double-reefed sails, with which we proceeded until eleven, when, to secure the safety of the "Supply," we ran under Herschel Island, and took an early dinner; for the periods of our meals were at all times subject to the convenience of the moment. The afternoon's fortune was little propitious: the three boats all proceeded under sail, the "Supply" being closely waited upon by the others, which was indeed a necessary measure of precaution, for she shipped a good deal of water, and obliged us to come to an early halt under the lee of a gravelly island spit, near to and south-east of Calton Point. Long large fires of drift-wood were made, on each side of which the damaged biscuit was spread, and in this way considerably dried; but one evil was repaired only by the infliction of another; for in addition to its previous mouldiness and gall-like flavour, it was now plentifully inter-mixed with sand and grit, which fought fierce battles

with our hapless molars. Kay's Point was rounded in the afternoon of the 23rd, during the morning of which we were visited by a small party of Esquimaux, and our night's sojourn was made a few miles to the eastward, where were several deserted huts of drift-wood, of which latter great quantities lay upon the beach, proving its exposed position.

The banks were high and steep, and covered with grass and flowers in luxuriance, among which we chased three red foxes. A single Esquimaux visited our bivouac, with few signs of fear; and after receiving some small presents, departed to fetch us some fish. During this and the previous night a heavy dew was first observed. Our visitor returned in a few hours, bringing the promised fish; and had become so well assured of our amicable disposition, that his wife and children now accompanied him. We tracked along shore during the morning, which was the most favourable mode of proceeding. Mr. Pullen and myself roamed frequently along and above the high banks in search of plants and flowers, which we never failed to collect; and while so engaged I came upon a very extraordinary spot: four or five immense mounds, like the ancient barrows so frequently met with in England and elsewhere, stood upon a nearly level space, in a break in the high

banks, between King and Sabine Points. They were from twenty to forty feet high, and their summits at least a hundred above the sea, conical in form, and pierced with innumerable swallow-holes. Placed where they could be of no use to any people, too far removed from the sea, and too regular in form to have been recently shaped by its action, they were a complete paradox; and I could conceive no cause, natural or artificial, for their existence in this spot, unless, as their substance was mud and very fine black mould, they were formed by deposit from successive land-slips, in succeeding spring seasons, upon the melting of the snows. I had not, unfortunately, time for minute notice of these remarkable objects, as the boats and my comrades were already far in advance, and I was forced to follow in haste.

We landed in the evening near Sabine Point, and found here an Esquimaux winter hamlet, built of drift-wood and sods. It was at present only tenanted by females of all ages and very young boys, the men being all absent on fishing and hunting excursions. The younger ladies, some of whom were prettily-featured and of tolerable figure, lent their assistance to haul the boats upon the beach; nor was theirs trifling aid; for, reared in unremitting toil, they are strong and hardy enough; nor does their vigour appear to

decline early ; for although nearly all the old women we saw were, candidly to speak, almost hideous, their strength did not seem to have forsaken them greatly. We obtained by barter some very fine fish, among which were beautiful salmon, also various articles of dress and curiosity. From one damsel I purchased the frock she wore ; and although we of a milder clime found the night sensibly cold, the loss of the garment did not seem to be at all inconvenient ; it was decorated with a number of small white beads, but these were particularly exempted in the bargain, and the girls were all most anxious to obtain this kind. A few faint streaks of Aurora were observed to night, the first seen during the season. I think it worth while to notice the abstraction of two articles at this place, taken probably while the boats were partly unloaded : one was a bottle, containing lemon syrup ; the other a handsome clasp-knife, of Spanish manufacture, about ten inches long, having the handle of ivory, with etching in compartments ; its recognition by any future expedition may be productive of interest.

A strong current running to the westward, of fresh and yellow water, evidenced on the 25th proximity to the efflux of the Mackenzie, our delight at which may well be imagined. We landed in the

morning on Escape Reef, to examine the compasses, which had become unaccountably sluggish, and indeed useless; and passing between this and the mainland, grounded in the afternoon in Shoalwater Bay, and landed for the night on Tent Island, which is aptly named, for several curious very slight frames of wood, which were evidently for tents, stood near where we pitched our canvas houses. This was a beautiful spot, verdant and level, and intersected by long lakes of pellucid water. During the day two Esquimaux men—the last we saw on the voyage—came out to us in their kiaks, and accompanied us for a considerable distance: they were full of talk, but we could only make out that a large river was near, with white men on its banks. In our progress on the 26th, we began to observe low scrub along the shore; the water also was greatly discoloured, turbid, and perfectly fresh; all evidencing near approach to the goal of our ardent wishes.

We were engaged during the 27th in making observations and examining sundry labyrinthine passages; and in the afternoon entered a narrow, but deep and rapid channel, which we ascended for about two miles, where we landed on the left bank, and hailed with satisfaction our entrance into the Mackenzie River, and the probable speedy

termination of this arduous and most comfortless voyage.

A clause in Mr. Pullen's instructions directed, if possible, a visit to Whale Island : this he attempted with one boat's crew, next day, but returned in the evening of the 29th, without having accomplished his object, the weather having been very inimical to success.

The ascent of the river was accomplished principally by tracking, which, always laborious, was here a very great task for our poor fellows, who were almost new to its delights, and had frequently to wade knee-deep in water or mud, with a temperature considerably below freezing. The banks were covered near the sea with low willow scrub ; but as we proceeded, this grew higher : a few stunted spruce firs appeared, and gradually the rigorous character of the vegetation changed to a milder aspect. The tracks of bears, moose, and reindeer, were frequent ; occasionally, also, prints of the mocassins of some solitary hunter gave sign of human life. The banks displayed the effects of the enormous force exerted by the spring-flushes, with their cargoes of ice ; being, in the bends of the channel, undermined to within a few feet of the surface, and in some places a succession of terraces had been formed by the same agents.

On the 4th of September, after remarking the continually increasing luxuriance of vegetation and growth of the trees, and passing a channel which we took to be the mouth of the Peel River, we reached a position at first conjectured to be Point Separation, which observations placed us four miles to the south of. Mr. Pullen and myself left our encampment with one boat to examine the banks, bury information, and erect a cross; and on return, learned that an Indian had visited the party, and given the men to understand by signs that a settlement of whites was not far distant, to which Mr. Pullen determined to proceed, though now pretty confident that we had ascended the Peel by mistake, and were near the fort of the Hudson's Bay Company, established on its bank. This opinion was correct; we were met on the morning of the 5th by Mr. Wm. Lucas Hardisty, the gentleman in charge of the post, who had been informed of our approach by the Indian who visited the tents last evening; and he now escorted us to the establishment, which was styled Fort Macpherson.

I enter now upon the relation of a period which has little in common with the foregoing parts of my narrative: an entirely new phase of existence has to be presented—new habits, new companions, almost a new nature. No longer inmates of a ship, no longer

tempting, on a barren and frozen coast, the fearful consequences contingent, in our unprovided condition, upon the destruction of our frail barks, or impediment to our progress, I have to speak of dreary winter's residence in almost cheerless solitude, amid dense forests and universal snow.

Our ascent of the Mackenzie had been undertaken for the purpose of reaching Fort Good Hope, where, or at this place, it was intended we should winter: the report of the resources of this station induced Mr. Pullen to leave a portion of his party here, and proceed with the remainder to Fort Good Hope; the expedition to unite in the spring to proceed to England. He accordingly gave me orders to remain with five men; the greater portion of the stores with one boat, were also left; and on the 6th of September Mr. Pullen with seven men departed in the "Logan" for Fort Good Hope, which is the most northerly post of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Mackenzie River, and for which place he was furnished with a guide.

There were several Indians at Fort Macpherson, who awaited the return of a boat which is yearly dispatched up the Mackenzie to Fort Simpson, the head-quarters of the district, for supplies to barter in exchange for the furs and provisions furnished by

them. They were now preparing for a grand dance upon her arrival, which is always a most important event and season of rejoicing to them. Upon a line on the strand hung several eagle-skins, with the feathers of which they would ornament themselves on the festal occasion. They were to-day painted in different ways and varieties of colour; some with broad patches across the face; others with stripes, and having one cheek or eyebrow of a different hue to its opposite. I observed one or two with "wampum" (a kind of long hollow shell), through the septum of the nose; but understood that this appendage is gradually falling into disuse since the settlement of whites in this quarter. The Indians we were among belonged to the large tribe of Loucheux, or Quarrellers, and were particularly distinguished by the title of "Fond du Lac Loucheux," that being the name of an enlargement in this, the Peel River, five days' journey (about a hundred miles) above the fort, where these Indians congregate in great numbers to fish. Another tribe called "Rats" come across the mountains from the Rat river with meat and furs to barter. The two tribes speak the same language, but have a somewhat different pronunciation of it. The very obliging communications of Mr. Hardisty gave them a character for great indolence and improvi-

dence ; the “Fond du Lacs” more so perhaps than the Rat Indians. They are both great gormandisers, and will devour solid fat, or even drink grease to surfeiting. When in provision they pass their time in continual feasting, and are of course often in the opposite extreme, but do not bear starvation with so great patience as the “Dogribs,” Hare, or Slave-Indians.

A curious custom matrimonial is said to exist among them, which Mr. Hardisty thus related to me. When a female child becomes two or three years old, a bargain is made with the parents, in which the mother is most interested, by some youth of the tribe, that she is to become his wife when marriageable ; the settlement is deferred until that period, but the contract is always binding : and should another lover step in, and by any means succeed in obtaining the damsel, she is not considered to be his wife until he has made satisfactory compensation to the *ci-devant* bridegroom. Polygamy is practised, generally in proportion to the rank and wealth of the man, a young wife being added to the *stock on hand*, when one becomes too old for the laborious employments imposed upon the females ; the new acquisition becoming, of course, the favourite sultana. I saw while here a Loucheux Indian, who, some five years since, killed one of the

“Rats,” with whom his tribe were then at enmity, and his life was sought in return. The company, however, redeemed his life by payment of a fine, and the tribes are now on a friendly footing: the fine paid was forty *skins*, to explain which term I must notice that the Indian currency, or that set up by the Hudson’s Bay Company in their exchanges with the Indians, is conducted by means of proportionate values to a single standard. This standard is a large beaver-skin, and called a skin: thus the price paid to redeem this man’s life was not really forty beaver-skins, but articles of value equivalent to their amount, as follows:—

A gun	equal to	20	skins.
A blanket	„	10	„
Six measures of powder	„	6	„
Thirty-six bullets	„	2	„
A large worsted belt	„	2	„
Total value received		<u>40</u>	„

By this species of exchange or value all articles on either side are rated, the company having an established tariff for each district, which may not, on any account, be deviated from, unless by revision at head-quarters.

The Indians and Esquimaux are still as great enemies as when Dease and Simpson made their excursions upon the coast, despite the strenuous

endeavours of officers of the Company to establish friendly intercourse. They are mutually afraid; but the Esquimaux are now nonplussed by the guns of their adversaries. They say that they only entertain hatred against the Loucheux of Fond du Lac, and constantly meet and converse with those of the Mackenzie, although with an intervening distance, each probably standing in suspicious fear of the other; but with the Indians of the Peel River the case is very different. "War to the knife" exists between them and the Esquimaux. There is a tradition accounting for this, which, although vague, I think worthy of mention.

Many winters ago, how far back is uncertain, the two races were friends, and used to hunt together. On one of these occasions, when a large party was assembled, a few of the Indians, who, with a number of the Esquimaux, had been detached from the main body, did not return with them. The Esquimaux said that they had become separated; but this was not credited by the friends of the missing, who believed them to have been treacherously murdered. Dissembling their intentions, they parted from the others, and returning by night, attacked and killed many of them: the feud has since that period been constantly kept alive by alternate outrages.

CHAPTER XVII.

Horrible Esquimaux attack.—Massacre of Loucheux.—Indian bravery.—Anatomical research.—Five Commoners make one Chief.—Mr. Peers' unsuccessful mediation.—Indian instincts of revenge.—Indian supplies. Leave for Fort Norman.—Indian Guides.—Followers dog us.—Enemy captures our stores.—Enter Mackenzie.—Guides quit us.—Dogs again.—Encamp.—Our hut takes fire.—Pine Forests.—Ice-master frost-bitten.—Reach Fort Good Hope.—Mr. Mc Beath; his kind attentions.—Cent Sous Rapid.—Bear River.—Burning banks.—Reach Fort Norman.—Mr. Mc Kenzie; his hospitality.—Salteaux' Legend of the Deluge.—Wolf Brothers & Co.

FOUR or five years ago a party of fifteen or twenty Esquimaux ascended the Mackenzie, and entered the Peel river, where, just at its mouth, were encamped a party of Fond du Lac Loucheux, consisting of three men, their wives, and five children. These they came upon secretly at night, and surrounding the lodge wherein they slept, gave a fearful yell, which awakened the inmates, who, rushing out in affright, were successively struck down by the arrows of their merciless foes; only one escaped, a little boy, of nine years old, who made his way through the woods up to the Company's fort, to the surprise both of friends and enemies, who never expected him to

live through the journey, if even able to find his way up to the Fort through the tangled maze, which had sheltered him. After this ferocious exploit the Esquimaux party continued their ascent of the "Peel," and at a couple of miles distance below the present Fort encountered an Indian, since nicknamed Bourreau, or the hangman, but whose proper appellation was Vayd-sich-tchah (the deer's brother).

The chief and three others crossed a small creek, behind which the rest of the party lay in ambush; and counterfeiting friendship, commenced to parley with Le Bourreau, who, however, knowing his company, was not lightly deceived; and soon observing significant winks interchanged, and arrows slyly preparing, instantly anticipated his foes by taking the initiative. He felled the chief with his gun, and discharged it at another, who was also killed; the other two gained their canoes in haste; but one of them received a shot, and falling over, capsized his frail bark: the other man tried to right his boat, but was at last obliged to leave him to his fate, having himself been fired at, but without effect. Those in ambush also fled; and Le Bourreau commenced a post-mortem examination of the chief, merely, as he expressed himself, to see if he was fat. He made incisions lengthwise and crosswise in the carcase,

pulled out the interior arrangements, possibly, like heathen priests, to consult their auguries, and cutting the cheek-bones out, brought them up to the fort, and offered to present them as a trophy to Mr. Pruden, then in charge of the post.

Since that period no affray had occurred between the hostile parties, nor had Esquimaux been seen in the Peel; but the Rat Indians were informed by a party of Esquimaux, who live somewhere near the Colville, and are friendly, that those near the mouth of the Mackenzie declared that they must have five lives of Loucheux for that of the chief who was killed.

Mr. Peers, one of the Company's officers, made an endeavour, not long before the period of our visit, to conciliate the Esquimaux. He sent various presents to them with messages of friendly import; but they replied that he desired only to entrap them, and that the whites supplied the Loucheux with guns for their destruction.

These excellent and praiseworthy endeavours were thus rendered abortive; nor would it be an easy task to reconcile the races, since even the Loucheux, when offered rewards to abstain from hostilities, would not accept them, saying, that they should only break faith with their friends the whites, as they could not restrain themselves at sight of an Esquimaux, but must have at

him. This was at any rate an ingenuous and honest confession, however much it displayed the revengeful tendency of their savage natures.

An Indian who, with two others, arrived at the Fort with meat, had been very successful in his summer's hunt. He had killed since July nearly a hundred reindeer and one moose, the dried sides of which had been put in "caches" in the mountains, whence upon the snowfall, they would be brought hither by dogs and sledges.

The 18th of September brought the long-expected boats from Fort Simpson, and with them came Mr. Peers, who resumed charge of the station. Myself and party were very disagreeably surprised by a communication from that gentleman that we could not be retained here during the winter, insufficiency of provisions being assigned as the reason. Mr. Peers had seen Lieutenant Pullen near Fort Good Hope, but no communication had occurred on the subject, and a short note from my commander had no reference to it.

I was recommended to proceed immediately to Fort Norman, an intermediate post on the Mackenzie, where I should find "ample maintenance" for myself and party. There was no help for it; go we must, and at noon next day we bade farewell to our kind

friend Mr. Hardisty, whose most obliging disposition I here pay tribute to ; also to Mr. and Mrs. Peers, that gentleman having been accompanied by his bride, and departed on a journey which we regretted had not been undertaken a fortnight earlier ; for, as may well be guessed, the advance of the season did not increase the mildness of temperature. We were obliged to leave four hundred pounds of preserved meats and vegetables behind, our boat—which had been snugly hauled up on the beach in expectation of the winter's sojourn—being too deeply laden to carry them.

Two Indians accompanied us, to point out the nearest cut into the Mackenzie, after which we were to find our own way as we best might to Fort Good Hope. We did not encamp until a late hour ; and were greatly amused by the antics of our guides, who were continually peeping and peering about among the bushes, and into the shadows, evidently in an agony of suspense lest Esquimaux should be lurking in the vicinity. The Indians were certainly greatly afraid of their sea-coast neighbours, who, since the acquisition of firearms, also stand much in awe of those possessing them. We were greatly annoyed, soon after departing from Fort Mac Pherson, to see nearly a dozen dogs belonging to the establish-

ment following us along the river's bank, and endeavoured to drive them back; but without permanent success, as after encamping at a late hour, we were vexed at their running in amongst us; nor was their journey bootless. During the night the rascals made a determined attack upon the boat, and ate up about thirty pounds of fresh venison, which we had brought for immediate consumption. They must have had cunning and perseverance enough, as it was stowed in the bottom of the boat, and well covered up.

On entering the Mackenzie early next morning the Indians quitted us, and we pursued our way alone. The great breadth and swift current of the river presented a remarkable contrast to the narrow sluggish stream we had just left, and my wonder was great however we could have entered the Peel by mistake; but the mystery was easily explained. The Mackenzie, at Point Separation, divides into two branches, which are again subdivided in their descent into a perfect labyrinth of narrow channels.

Those horrid dogs followed us until late in the afternoon, although we crossed the river several times for convenience of tracking, which is the universal mode of ascending these rapid rivers, unless a strong fair breeze makes sails of use. Passing Point

Separation, the head of the delta, we encamped late in the evening, if that may be called encamping which was simply lighting a fire and squatting round it, with no other shelter than our sail—a very small affair—to protect six people. Soon after landing one of the crew informed me he had seen an Esquimaux oomiak pulling up in-shore at dusk ; but not having been certain, would not mention it at the time. Desiring him never again to hesitate in such a case, I set a watch during the night, and had the arms in readiness ; but we saw no sign of the bugbear, and I do not doubt he was mistaken. I had procured a blanket for each man at Peel's River ; this comfortable provision modified, in a measure, the severity of our journey ; but at this late period of the season we suffered sufficiently from its inclemency, as frost and snow had set in. At that period I was so little experienced in this mode of travelling, as to be unable to avail myself of many now well-known expedients for additional comfort. Nor had the gentlemen at Fort Mac Pherson thought of enlightening my ignorance, being so much accustomed to this primitive life as to deem it probably a matter of course that we should know all about it. In our ascent of the river we had varied fortune ; an occasional fine day, but more generally snow and sleet, with biting winds. Many

birds were seen : swans, geese, ducks, hawks, crows, a few gulls, and others ; also frequent tracks of moose and reindeer. One night we took up our quarters in a deserted Indian lodge, a most welcome shelter, of which however we were nearly deprived ; for having lit a fire inside, a spark caught the dry material of the hut, which was constructed of logs and pine-brush, and roofed with bark, and speedily set it in a blaze, which we had some difficulty in quenching.

One is much struck on first acquaintance with the dense forests, principally of pine, which cover the face of this country, at observing large tracts overrun with fire, which withers and scatches trees and lesser vegetation alike. We saw many such fires and their effects. A spark from an Indian's pipe, or the unextinguished fire of a bivouac, ignites the grass and moss, and with a breeze very soon overspreads large spaces. These fires will frequently smoulder throughout the summer amongst the moss and underwood, ceasing only when quenched by the winter's snows.

The ice-master, who was of the party, was unfortunately frost-bitten in the toes on the night of the 24th. The injury was much aggravated by exposure to the fire before circulation was restored ; and he suffered long and severely.

We reached Fort Good Hope in the evening of

the 26th, and were kindly welcomed by Mr. Adam Mac Beath, the gentleman in charge of that station, who paid every attention to our comfort, and undertook the treatment of the injured feet, which, until seeing, he would not believe were frost-bitten. He applied a poultice made of the inner bark of the larch fir, which was a great relief. We remained two days here to repose the crew, and experienced much kindness and hospitality from Mr. Mac Beath and his amiable lady. He furnished me with two Indians as guides, and to assist in ascending the river to Fort Norman, had mocassins made for the party, and lent me his tent, which proved of great value in our hitherto unprovided condition. The remainder of the journey to Fort Norman was accomplished with much more ease and comfort than the foregoing. The two Indian lads were of great assistance in tracking, though, as guides, little dependence could be placed in them. A small rapid was surmounted soon after quitting Fort Good Hope; and on the 1st October a larger one, called "Cent Sous," after an Indian of that name, who was, I believe, drowned there in his canoe. Mr. Pullen had at Fort Good Hope exchanged the "Logan" for a larger boat, in which to continue his journey; and I had the woe unutterable of seeing my god-child and

favourite loaded to the gunwale with fish, which exhaled any other than pleasing odours, being, in fact, fish very much out of water.

The mouth of Bear River, which is the outlet to Bear Lake, and whose crystal waters contrasted strongly with the turbid stream of the Mackenzie, was passed on the 5th; also, an hour or two later, some remarkable burning banks, which sent up numerous columns of smoke, but at present emitted no flame. The morning of the 6th was bitterly cold; a piercing wind chilled us throughout, and frost gathered on our hair and beards. We reached Fort Norman about noon, and were kindly received by Mr. H. E. Mac Kenzie, the gentleman in charge of the post, to whom I made known the reasons of our visit. From him I learned that Mr. Pullen had safely arrived here about a fortnight since, and proceeded onwards with his party to Fort Simpson, the headquarters of the district, where he would be accommodated for the winter.

Two days after our arrival here, the guides who had escorted Mr. Pullen to Fort Simpson, touched on their return; and I learnt that he had remained there with two men only, the rest of his party being despatched to a fishing-station, on Great Slave Lake, where they would winter. Although it was not correct

that there was ample maintenance for my party at Fort Norman during the winter, I decided, for various reasons, of which the lateness of the season was the most prominent, on proceeding no farther until the spring, as I found that Bear Lake would afford my party the same subsistence as they would have on the Great Slave Lake. On learning my resolve, Mr. Mac Kenzie kindly assisted to the best of his power in rendering our sojourn as comfortable as might be: we were supplied with additional blankets, which had now become highly necessary, and sundry other articles of wearing apparel, of which all stood much in need. My condition was as little enviable as that of the others, as I quitted the "Plover" in the expectation of being absent about a month only, and had not, therefore, provided a varied wardrobe nor many other conveniences.

During more than a month's stay at Fort Norman, rendered necessary by the state of the ice, which prevented the journey to Bear Lake, not much of incident occurred. The seamen, unaccustomed to the peculiar fare of this region, made many wry faces when presented, as a treat, with the carcase of a beaver. One expressed his very strong conviction that a cat would be preferable, and various other facetious remarks were made. These objections were

really rather unreasonable, for beaver meat is generally esteemed a delicacy, though possessing a peculiar flavour. I, at any rate, allowed myself no such foolish qualms, considering it preferable to my repasts of seal and whale-flesh among the Tuski.

Frost had now set in permanently, and ice commenced to drift in the Mackenzie towards the end of the month, increasing day by day, and before the 1st of November all but the main channel had frozen up. We had little now to amuse or enliven, unless it was created by ourselves. Fortunately a great treasure was ours in the amusement afforded by a very good violin belonging to Mr. Mac Kenzie; and we were thus enabled to have many a merry dance. Nor were the pleasures of conversation altogether unprofitable. I never tired of asking questions respecting the country and tribes we had newly entered upon, and gained much information from the intelligent gentleman with whom I was located. Rich was he in store of Indian legends, and no niggard in imparting his knowledge.

The following is one among the many tales with which he whiled away the weary moments. I have made a few slight alterations from his text, which was given as narrated by the Salteaux tribe of Indians, in communication with whom Mr. Mac Kenzie passed

much of his early life. The vague veil of legendary lore has been thrown over stories of this kind, and much allowance should be made for the simple nature of the Indian, who does not believe all implicitly, but apparently likes to have a reason for everything ; and where his knowledge ends, calls in the marvellous to his aid.

THE INDIAN LEGEND OF THE DELUGE AND SUBSEQUENT
REPRODUCTION OF THE UNIVERSE.

Once upon a time lived Indians, among whom dwelt Wis-kay-tchach, a great medicine man. With them were also a Wolf and his two sons, who, in the early state of nature supposed to be alluded to, were on a footing of intimacy with human bipeds. Indeed, Wis-kay-tchach called the old wolf his brother, and the young ones his nephews ; for he recognised all animals as his relations. In the winter time the whole party began to starve ; and, for the purpose of seeking food, the parent wolf announced his intention of separating from the band with his children, upon which Wis volunteered his company. Off they set accordingly, and shortly came upon the track of a moose. “ Here let you and I halt and smoke,” says the old Wolf, “ while my sons pursue and catch the moose.” After a time, the young ones not returning,

Wis and Wolf set off after them, and presently found blood upon the snow, by which they knew that the moose was killed. Soon they reached the young wolves; but no moose was to be seen, the cubs lying panting for breath with distended stomachs, for they had eaten up the whole moose.

They told Wis to make a fire; but he wanted to know why he should do this, as they had eaten all. "Never mind," said they; "make a fire," which he at last proceeded to do; and, on returning to them, found the whole of the moose restored, and already quartered and cut up. The young fellows divided the spoil into four portions; but one retained the tongue, and the other the mouffle,* which are the chief delicacies of the animal. Wis was not pleased at this, and grumbled greatly; and when they had well teased him, which was why they withheld these parts, they gave them up to the gourmand. Before long, the provision was exhausted, upon which one of the young wolves said he was going to make marrow-fat, which is done by breaking up the bones very small, and boiling them for a considerable time, when they yield a very pure and rich fat, preferable to any other. He told the rest to lie down, and not to look at his

* The upper lip, or mouffle of this animal is elongated and cartilaginous; it will boil down into a perfect jelly, and is deservedly much prized as a delicacy.

proceedings, lest a bone should fly in their eyes. They did so; but Wis presently gets curious, takes a sly look, and sees the extractor of fat chumping up the bones in his teeth, and, as forewarned, a fragment flies out and strikes him in the eye, which makes him roar lustily. "Serve you right!" says the Wolf. "You were looking." Wis protested against the accusation; but was nevertheless obliged to put up with his misfortune. When the other had finished, Wis says it is his turn; and, as before, warns the others not to look. He pounds away vigorously at the bones, and presently throws one at the young wolf which had punished him. "Aha!" says he; "you were looking." "No," says the brother cub; "it was I who was looking, and saw you throw the bone at my brother:" upon which they all laughed heartily at Wis, who was caught out in his tricks. This resource being exhausted, they again began to starve, and agreed to separate: the old Wolf going off with one of his sons, leaving Wis and the other to hunt together, as they would by this arrangement have more chance for game.

We now lose sight of the old Wolf, and continue with Wis and his nephew. The latter kills a few deer, and brings them home in his stomach, disgorging them as before upon arrival; but at last informs his

uncle that he cannot catch any more, whereupon Wis sits up all night making medicine or conjuring. In the morning he tells his nephew to go a-hunting ; but to be careful that at every valley, or the least hollow place he has to pass, he must throw a stick over before jumping it himself, or else some evil will certainly befall him. Away goes the hunter ; espies and pursues a deer, taking care to follow his uncle's directions. But, alas ! when just up with his prey, a small hollow intervenes, which he thinks he can jump easily ; and, attempting it without the usual precaution, goes plump into a river, and is there killed and devoured by water-lynxes.* After long waiting for his nephew, Wis set off in search of him, and coming to the spot whence he had jumped, guessed that he had neglected his warning, and fallen into the stream. He observed, on a tree near, a king-fisher staring fixedly into the water, and asked him what he was looking at so earnestly. The king-fisher replies that he is looking at the skin of Wis-kay-tchach's nephew, which serves as a door-mat to the dwelling of the water-lynxes, those animals having devoured him. Wis calls the bird to him, and begins to comb its head, and put a ruff about its neck to make a queue for it ;

* My informant did not know what animals were meant by these "water-lynxes," but conjectured them to be of fabled origin, created by the mention of seals, which few of the Indians ever see.

but the bird flew away before this was finished, *which accounts for king-fishers now having only a portion of it at the back of their heads.* The bird would not return, but tells him that the water-lynxes often go on shore to lie on the sand ; and that to be revenged, he must make himself into a stump near, but take care that he is not pulled down by frogs and snakes, which the lynxes will be sure to send to try and dislodge him. Upon this information he returns to his camp, and “makes big medicine ;” and provides all things which will be needed, of which a *large canoe*, to hold all the animals that cannot swim, is the principal.

Before daylight, having completed his preparations, and embarked all the before-mentioned passengers, he proceeds to the neighbourhood of the lynxes, and secures his boat behind a point of land, then transforms himself into a stump, and awaits their appearance. Presently the black one comes out and lies down upon the sand, then the grey, and lastly, the white one which had killed the young wolf, pops its head out of the water ; but espies the stump, and cries out to his brethren that he “never saw that before.” They carelessly replied that it must always have been there ; but the wary one still distrusted, and sent frogs and snakes to try and pull it down. Wis had a severe struggle to keep himself upright ;

but survived the trial, and the white lynx, being now satisfied, lays itself down upon the sand to repose. Wis waits a short time ; then, resuming his natural shape, takes his spear and creeps softly up to the white lynx. He had been warned by his feathered monitor to strike at the shadow of the animal, or he would assuredly fail in his aim ; but his cagerness makes him forget this injunction, and he strikes full at the animal, and misses him. The creatures rush to the water ; but Wis has yet another chance, and aiming again, and now at the shadow, desperately wounds the beast, which, however, escapes with the rest into the river. Instantly the water begins to boil and rise, and Wis makes for his boat as fast as he can. The water continued flowing, flowing, until land, trees, and hills were all covered. Wis having before taken care of all creatures which could not swim at all, now busied himself picking up those which were able to swim for a short time.

On his conjuring night everything had been prepared for the reproduction of the earth, with one all-important exception ; it was necessary to have a small portion of earth to form, as it were, a nucleus for the new land ; and this he set about obtaining. Tying a string to the leg of a loon, he ordered it to try for soundings, and to persevere in its descent, even if it

should die, for that was of no consequence, as he could soon restore it to life. Down goes the diver, and presently the string was not jerked any more; so Wis pulls up and finds the bird dead: he blows upon and brings it back to life, and is told that the bottom was not reached. Next he sends an otter, which is drawn up in the same plight, and similarly revived, and whose success is no better than that of the loon. Now he sends a beaver, which, upon being resuscitated, reports that it saw the tops of the trees, but could not sink any deeper. Last of all, Wis ties a large stone to a musquash, and puts them over: down goes the rat, and presently the string is slackened; Wis hauls up, and finds the little creature dead, but holding a small quantity of earth in its tiny paws. He revives the messenger and spreads the earth out to dry, after which he blows upon it until it swells and spreads until it is very big. When he thought it large enough, a wolf was sent out to try its extent; but he soon returned, saying that the world was not large, whereupon Wis blew away again for a long time; then despatched a crow, and as the bird did not return, Wis concluded that the world was now large enough for all, and, with the animals, quits the canoe.

All disperse, and Wis in his travels meets a toad, which sings as it goes, "Nee-shay-woo-shin" (or

“I rattle”). “What is that you sing?” asks Wis-kay-tchach. “I sing that I rattle,” answers the toad. “And what do you sing for?” returns Wis. “You must know,” replies the toad, “that I am a Great Medicine, and am now going to extract the barb with which that bad man, Wis-kay-tchach, wounded my grandson, the water-lynx.” Wis knocks the Great Medicine on the head, and skinning him, assumes the disguise; then trots off to the dwelling of the water-lynxes, where he is cordially welcomed by the two unwounded brothers, and conducted to his victim. He sends the others out of the sick chamber, as he must “make very strong medicine,” which their presence will disturb; they accordingly depart, and Wis proceeds to push the spear-head farther into, instead of drawing it out of the wound. Having thus killed his patient, he retires, and tells the brothers that they must on no account disturb their sick relation, as the medicine must have power until the morrow, and so he departs, throwing off the disguise when out of sight.

Not long after this period Wis-kay-tchach meets an old woman, who is peeling willows (to make nets with the bark), and crying desperately. He asks why she laments, and the ancient dame replies that she mourns for her son the water-lynx, which that cruel wretch

Wis-kay-tchach has murdered; and that they are about to bury him near, and then abandon the place. Wis serves the old lady as he did the toad, of "big medicine" profession, assumes her dress and occupation of collecting willow-bark, and howls away far louder and more dismally than she did, and in this way returns to the lodge, where, with the brothers' aid, the corpse was placed upon a stage prepared for it; and the fictitious mother tells the rest to proceed on their journey, as she must remain to weep, but will presently follow them. So soon as they are out of sight Wis sets to work to "make grease" from the carcase; but the sons become tired of waiting, and send back snakes (which appear to have been their slaves) to look for their mother. When they reach Wis he gives them some of the grease which he has made, and bids them return with it to the brothers, who thereupon see that they have been tricked by Wis-kay-tchach, and return to catch and punish him. Being hard pressed, and meeting with a badger, he entreats it to dig a hole in the ground by which he may escape; and promises to give one of the bladders of grease with which he is now laden as a reward. The badger digs accordingly; and they come up through the ground at a distance from their pursuers; but when the animal claims its

fee, Wis says it may consider itself very lucky that he did not kill it while passing underground. All the bladders are now emptied into a hollow, and form a large lake, in which Wis invites all the animals to come and swim, that they may gather fat : the rabbit and partridge complain, after their unctuous bath, that they have gathered too much fat, so Wis cleans it from them by running his hand over them ; *and this is the reason why the rabbit has so little fat upon the shoulder, and the partridge a small quantity about the tail.*

Although the foregoing and other legends are so childish, they should nevertheless be presented, as indications of the simple nature and primitive ideas of the Indian race. Such stories are recounted in a monotonous sing-song to the assembled members of a lodge, and their repetition never tires. The Indian seldom or never laughs boisterously, appreciation of the passages considered the most amusing is marked by a low grunt of approval ; and this is particularly the case where the hero of their tales, which Mr. Wis-kay-tchach most frequently represents, has practised or suffered from some act of duplicity ; these appear to tickle the listeners mightily.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Gastronomy.—River Ice.—Trapping.—Start for Great Bear Lake.—Cross the Mackenzie on the Ice.—Felling trees to encamp.—Raising the Wind.—Penetrate dense Forests.—Cross Lakes.—Cranberries, &c.—Indian Hut.—Salmon Trout.—Summary ejection.—Slave Indians.—Indian Divorce.—Selling Wives.—Cannibal acquaintance.—Sir J. Franklin's Hut.—Dreadful Starvation.—Eating an Orkney man.—Our Hut.—An airy situation.—Occasional House-warming.—Lots of tin.—Fish and fish with it.—Swamp Tea.—Aurora.—Literary destitution.—Novel burial of a brother-in-law.

OUR diet, since reaching the Mackenzie, was in strange contrast to English fare, or that, principally of preserved meats, to which we had been accustomed in the "Plover." Dried reindeer or elk-flesh, which required vigorous mastication, and made the jaws ache apace; fresh goat, bear, and beaver-meat occasionally; and during the latter part of our stay at Fort Norman, meat could only be furnished two days in the week, with fish the other five; and as the latter was captured at Bear Lake in the summer and fall, and remained disembowelled and intact until used, it was in various stages of excellence, varying from the slightly-tainted to the absolutely stinking.

But as there was nothing else, we managed to eat it ; and after all were no worse off than the ancients, who esteemed asafetida a delicacy when mixed with their food, except that they fared thus from inclination, we from necessity ; and this is the case at many of the posts in the Hudson's Bay territory, where meat is not abundant. Flour, bread, and such like, seem to be considered matters of extreme luxury : a bag of flour is the entire allowance to some of the officers ; but this proceeds mainly, I imagine, from the difficulty of transport through so wild a country and great distance. I lived with Mr. Mac Kenzie while here, and fared as he did. We had two meals a day ; one between nine and ten, the other about six. Our bill of fare was tolerably unvarying : dry meat boiled, or fish roasted with the scales on, which, from want of custom I suppose, I found disagreeable when they got in my mouth ; tea, either black or green, as the packet might happen to be ; sugar, and occasionally a water pancake or fritter ;—but these were “like angels' visits,” and appreciated accordingly. At first, I sadly missed a bit of bread ; but habit reconciles one to everything. For all this, there were occasional delicacies. Reindeers' tongues we often tasted ; I need not remark upon their excellence ; also beaver and bear's meat, which are fat,—the tail of the former

entirely so, and, on first acquaintance, rather too rich for digestion.

When the ice had so much increased in the river as to begin to crowd upon the shores, along which ran a solid edge, we, who were unaccustomed to the sight, had much interest in watching its course. The current was very strong, and the sludge was turned up between the moving and fixed edges, precisely as a furrow is turned by the plough, while a kind of hissing roar, continuous and subdued, proved the resistance exerted. When the increasing drift retarded the current, the water rose considerably, and a second crust of ice formed on the shore ledges, and deceived the unwary when venturing upon it, being too weak to bear the feet, although snow-shoes, which embrace a larger surface, will sometimes enable one to pass on it. As these stations of the Hudson's Bay Company are established for the sole purpose of obtaining furs,—witness its motto, "*Pro pelle cutem*,"—no means to that end are neglected. Mr. Mac Kenzie had three or four traps set, which I often used to visit, and will tell my fortune on one of these occasions. Finding the trap had gone from its place, I had little trouble in discovering the direction of its migration; the trail was too well marked to permit of error, for frozen gouts of blood

and zigzag lines made by the sharp edges of the iron, sullied the snow. The track led right across the frozen branch of the river; arriving on the opposite bank of which I found a fox caught by the paw in the trap, which was now entangled in the underwood. The poor little creature's eyes glared with its agony; it was biting at the branches around, and struggling desperately; indeed, it would probably have soon escaped with the loss of its foot, which held only by a sinew, the bone being broken, and all else cut through by the sharp edges of the vice-like trap, much like a rat-trap or gin, but without teeth, which it had dragged, as I estimated, about a quarter of a mile. The sight was sickening, and I hastened to put it out of its misery, but broke my first stick, and had to get one heavier to accomplish the task; sure am I that few fair ones who now wear muff and tippet could resume them without a pang, had they witnessed the torture of this poor animal.

The ice in the Mackenzie "set fast" permanently on the 12th of November, and two days afterwards, four men of my party—the ice-master being left behind on account of his frost-bitten feet—three of the Company's, two Indians, and myself, started for our intended quarters on Great Bear Lake. The men of the Company had each charge of a sledge and

three dogs, laden with 200 pounds of stores and provisions ; the Indians led the way on snow-shoes, and my party—who had not those convenient appendages—brought up the rear. Our road lay first across the frozen river, which required much care and toil, for the ice was jumbled up in chaotic confusion, presenting sharp points and edges which hurt the feet, and many irregular masses projecting twelve or fifteen feet from the surface. After crossing the river, and ascending the steep banks upon the opposite side, we entered upon dense woods, and continued until sunset, when a halt was made for the night, and all set about preparing the encampment. A spot was chosen where dead trees abounded, which some proceeded to fell, others cleared the snow from a space, using their snow-shoes as shovels : some cut down small pines, of which the brush was laid down to serve as the floor of the camp, and the stems were arranged for shelter at the back and sides ; with our large party, two compartments were necessary, a heap of blazing logs lying between them ; and when all was completed, a very snug, but of course airy, resting-place invited us to repose, which after a hearty supper of pemmican was responded to by all. So long as the big fire blazed away merrily, the cold did not touch one greatly, but by-and-by, when all were

wrapped in slumber, the flames gradually decreased, and when I awoke benumbed all over, and my feet, oh ! so cold ! nought was in the place of the red pile I last looked upon but a few calcined log ends and a heap of smouldering ashes ; so to work I set with a will, carried more logs to their destruction, collected the burnt ends, raked the ashes together, and blew right earnestly until a ruddy blaze appeared ; then heaping on more logs, and becoming thoroughly warmed, I once more lay down to sleep, my companions dozing, snoring, growling, and starting, in happy unconsciousness of my proceedings.

We were up and afoot each day about daylight, and encamped, as described, at sunset ; our fare was pemmican uncooked, and although not very enticing in flavour, it is in my opinion the finest and most convenient sustenance one can carry : we consumed upon the average about two pounds per day, having *nothing* else but a little cocoa in the morning, and we never felt hungry or weak. Our road lay through dense forests, across numerous lakes and one or two small rivers, all now frozen over and covered with snow ; the path is marked in woods by “ blazing ” large trees and breaking down small ones, and when about to cross lakes, travellers carry branches and tops of small trees and stick them in the snow at

intervals. We saw numerous tracks of rabbits, martens, foxes, and others, but few of deer, which do not abound here as elsewhere. By digging under the snow, cranberries were obtained ; and on bushes grew berries of a sharp acid, which were hard frozen, and melted away in the mouth, contrasting pleasantly with the seeds of the wild rose, which were sweetness itself.

This journey occupied six days ; in the evening of the 19th we reached our destined habitation, wherein were now comfortably located an Indian with his wife and family, little expecting, good souls ! such unseasonable intrusion. We supped off some delicious salmon-trout caught in Bear Lake, and were glad to go to repose after our fatiguing trip.

A few days sufficed to settle us into a regular mode of life : two of the Company's men returned to Fort Norman ; the other, with the old Indian, set nets and hooks under the ice in Bear Lake ; our rude hut was thoroughly cleansed, and put to rights ; and arrangements made for the due performance of such slight duties as were necessary. Wood had to be cut regularly for fuel ; a hole made, and kept open in the ice of the lake for water ; and, more than all, the grand duties of the kitchen required much consideration, for the unity of material needed an exercise of

great ingenuity to obtain some variety. The Indians whom we had lately so unceremoniously dispossessed of their habitation, speedily constructed a good winter lodge at a short distance, and departed thither, bag and baggage. It was painful to see the load the women were made to carry ; but it is the common practice, and said to be the reason why the tribe we were now among are called "Slave Indians." With them, if a man desire to despoil his neighbour of his wife, a trial of strength, of a curious nature, ensues : they seize each other by the hair, which is worn long and flowing, and thus strive for the mastery, until one or another cries "peccavi." Should the victor be the envious man, he has to pay a certain number of skins for the husband-changing woman, who has herself no voice in the matter, but is handed over like any other piece of goods, and generally with the same unconcern. There's a pretty story for you, ladies ! How would you like such arrangements in our land of a queen ? The old Indian who assisted the fisherman was too remarkable a character to pass unmentioned. During periods of general starvation, which are unfortunately but too frequent in this region, he had devoured eleven or thirteen persons, among whom (charity begins at home) were, I believe, his parents, one wife, and the children of two. He

had now only one son left, a very fine boy, named Betshi, of whom he was doatingly fond, and certainly would not be likely to make a meal of him until all other relations and friends were disposed of. This old fellow was one of Sir J. Franklin's hunters, when he wintered here in 1826. I visited the site of his dwelling, almost within a stone's throw of our own rude hut ; but a shapeless mass of rubbish, and a few stones still remaining of some of the chimneys, were all to be seen of his resting-place ; and I could not help thinking how busy Time had been with both. This building must have been large ; the traces of eleven chimneys mark its extent : it was tenanted by about forty persons, including the people of the North-west Fur-trading Company. Dr., now Sir John, Richardson, was at first here with Sir John Franklin ; but the quantity of fish caught being insufficient for the maintenance of all, he removed with a party to a distance along the lake. Their resting-point has ever since been called Richardson's Fishery.

The number of victims to starvation in this country has been very great. In 1845 (?) the Company's people at Fort Good Hope were, without subsistence, and the Indians dying in crowds. The gentleman in charge of the station at that time heard one night the blows of the axe in the lodges near the Fort, by which

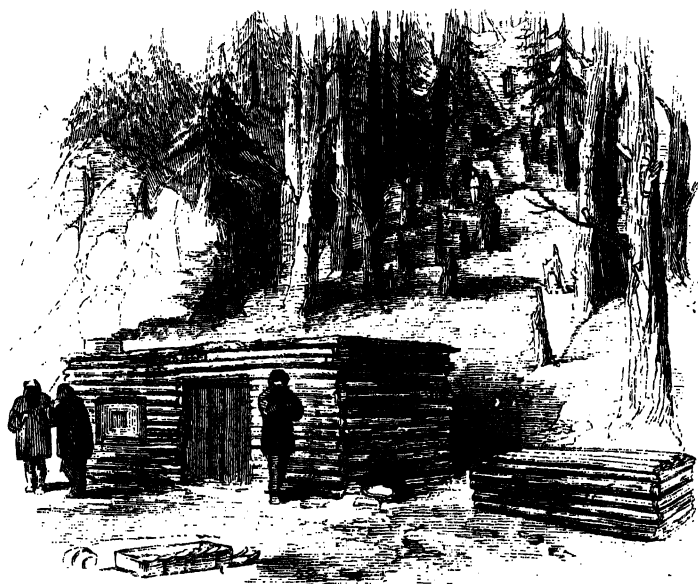
the weaker were killed, to be devoured. The Express-men, one Scotch, the other a native of Orkney, who were proceeding with letters to the post on the Peel River, were met by a party of starving Indians, who stole upon them at night, murdered and ate them and their provisions, and, as report goes, were in their turn slaughtered and devoured.

The commodious residence in which we were located deserves description, if only as a new proof that

“Man wants but little here below.”

It consisted of a solitary apartment, twenty by eighteen feet ; was constructed of roughly-hewn pine-logs of large dimensions, the interstices being plastered with mud, which I must remark, by the by, was the universal substitute for mortar in the Mackenzie River and adjacent districts. The two casements were formed by tightly-stretched sheets of semiluculent parchment, which, where imperfect, were repaired with scraps of foolscap ; the light admitted thereby was well suited for weak eyes ; the door had been made of green wood, and its parts had shrunk widely asunder ; the openings thus formed were stuffed with lynx-skin, which gave it a very motley appearance. The roof was flat, of sticks and moss, in

layers ; these being very dry, caught fire three or four times during our stay, and caused much trouble, and danger of losing our dwelling, which, rough though it was, we should sadly have missed at this season.



NEW FORT FRANKLIN.

No pampered luxury was evidenced in the nature and arrangement of the furniture : one treble, two double, and one single bedstead, of workmanship curious as elegant, being all the unaided product of the axe, stools of massive condition, each formed from a single block, and a table, which ever

perversely declined to repose upon more than two legs at a time, and whose wrinkled old face displayed a perpetual grin as if in mockery at our efforts, constituted the major part of the property ; the rest of the chattels were fishing-nets and lines, blankets, ancient garments, and a most unique collection of cooking utensils : four tin plates, one tin drinking cup, a bouilli tin for the same purpose, a fork, and two spoons of silver, and two of native horn, one of which from its antiquity might have belonged to Nebuchadnezzar, two kettles for fish, a coffee-pot for tea, and two pemmican tins for pitchers close the catalogue ; a tin saw, an auger, and sundry axes complete the tale of our riches : and to us important they were.

Of food the variety was not great so far as kind was concerned, but then we made amends for this in the modes of preparation. Thus, although we had only a species of salmon-trout occasionally, and a kind of herring always, we had boiled fish and roasted fish, dried fish and split fish, smoked fish and cured fish, fish soups, fish cakes, and fish, fish, fish, in every phase we could invent, one only excepted, of which we had a sufficiency while at Fort Norman.

Mr. Mac Kenzie had, from his scanty store, presented me with two pounds of tea, and twelve of sugar ; these

supplied us with a treat for a few Sundays, but on their expenditure we had to turn to the limpid waters of Bear Lake to quench thirst ; and though they were pure as seraph's tears, and bright as the eyes of loveliness, we had fair experience of the truthful adage, " too much of a good thing," &c. As may be supposed fish and water did not materially conduce to an increase of health or endurance; our complexions became colourless and transparent, and the tone of the digestive organs weakened ; one or two of us were frequently at or directly after a meal seized with an involuntary nausea, the stomach peremptorily rejecting the offered aliment. There was only one, even distant, substitute for the beverages we had ever been accustomed to ; this was made by boiling the plant called Swamp tea, which grows plentifully throughout North America—leaves, stalks, and all—in water, and drinking the infusion ; it has a strong bitter taste, liked by few, but it is, I believe, a fine tonic, and I tried to fancy I liked it, possibly because there was nothing else.

I have purposely avoided in my narrative all scientific details ; and have, therefore, hitherto left unnoticed the frequent occurrence of the *Aurora Borealis*, the most gorgeous as well as most wonderful of northern, and perhaps of any other phenomena :

let it not be imagined, nevertheless, that these splendid spectacles were disregarded; my journal voluminously records their appearance, but I shall here only introduce one extract as a type of the rest:—

“On the 9th of December, at about seven, with a cloudless sky, Aurora appeared,—first forming in an arch from N.N.E. to N.N.W.,—but later, about nine, dispersed into broken vertical rays, coruscating towards the zenith. Eleven P.M. I have just come in from viewing the Aurora, which now presents a gorgeous spectacle; it has shifted from its first positions, and now covers the southern half of the heavens.

“Orion bears about S.S.W., and on each side of that constellation to about forty-five degrees, rays are converging nearly to the zenith; they are perfectly regular in form and distance, and remind me of the lines of longitude upon a globe, like which also they are cut just below the zenith. Around and about them are wreaths and scrolls, lines and curves, masses and skirmishers of the luminous fluid, never still for an instant, but waving, rolling, advancing and retiring, folding and unfolding, fast and changeful as thought can fly; never twice the same, but like the fickle kaleidoscope, ever presenting some new appearance,

beautiful and wondrous as those already seen and vanished."

As the heavy curtain of a theatre is drawn up or let down, so are some of the flying lines expanding and contracting incessantly; others, again, seem mighty breakers, curling and turning under and about. There was one large mass, a perfect blaze of light, which seemed to be not twenty feet above me; others with less body appearing far, far away. On this occasion I fancied that I *heard* the Aurora, and so much was judgment misled by imagination, that I thought I saw the masses vibrating after contact, when, in fact, the noise I heard was indubitably produced by the cracking of the ice on the lake, as I afterwards became assured of.

On some occasions all the colours of the rainbow were displayed by turns, each visible but for an instant, then succeeded by another hue; vast irregular ever-changing fringe-like lines,—at one moment of an exquisite violet, the next of a grass-green tint,—engaged and delighted the eye: those above-named were the predominating colours, but all others, in every variety of shade and brilliancy, were evolved. A scene of sublime and awful magnificence.

We had little during our weary sojourn in this

miserable log-hut, which was now our home, to enliven or beguile its tedium. With scanty daylight, and neither oil nor candle, the only light we had for the greater portion of each twenty-four hours was that of the log fire which burned in one corner of the hovel. No books, not even a newspaper, to read and re-spell over, but I managed to obtain ink, pens, and paper, and in addition to keeping a voluminous journal of all, to the most trifling, occurrences, instituted a school for the seamen, one or two of whom improved considerably, though ours was literally the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties. The preparation of our meagre fare, cutting and bringing home fuel, and fetching water from the lake, did not fill up a third part of the time; birds or other game there were none, with the exception of an occasional white partridge or ptarmigan: this period was therefore, from its lack of occupation, a most dismal one, and any new idea for employment or amusement was hailed with delight. The old Indian who assisted the fisherman, and was with his son domiciled in the hut, made occasional trips in search of deer and beaver, and to set traps for martens, foxes, and wolves—but his success was almost negative; a few martens, a beaver, and one or two rabbits were his only prizes, though he was

frequently several days absent with only a scanty supply of food, and on one occasion there was quite a divided house on the question whether he had killed and feasted on the Indian who accompanied him, as he was accustomed to such proceedings. The fisherman told me that he had once visited Fort Norman, at a period of starvation, to solicit food ; and had, at the same time, the hands of his brother-in-law in his game-bag, having already *otherwise* entombed the remainder of his respected relation.

CHAPTER XIX.

Christmas festivities.—Parhelia.—Indian exaggeration.—A regular clipper.
—Sledging to Fort Norman.—Starving Indians.—Indian Theology.—
● Medicine Men.—Vapour Bath.—Heating water.—A Drone.—Diminution of Infanticide.—Making Medicine.—Pulling a-head.—Spring sets in.—Woodpeckers.—An Indian death.—Return to New Fort Franklin.
—Ravenous petty larceny.—Primitive notions.—Floods.—Doctor Rac.
—Start for Fort Simpson.—Hydrodynamic forces.—Bears.—Indian Dance.—A Tale of Horror:

CHRISTMAS arrived, and although prisoners in so barbarous a place at this season of rejoicing, we did not let it pass over without notice. I had reserved a few pounds of preserved meats, with one or two other relics of luxury, and we therefore, in comparison—by which woes and delights are ever measured—feasted royally. Green tea and pemmican, soup, parsnips and beef; behold a repast for princes. Ours was quite a picnic—the rugged floor of the den served at once for table and chairs, the place of soup-plates was supplied by preserved-meat tins, spoons by their tops, whose jagged edges were an exciting novelty, and we were merry enough, by comparison, again.

The cold was at times very severe ; our breath, congealing as it passed the ear, became audible in a sharp whirr, like a small escape of steam, and flannel froze so rigidly that it could be *broken* asunder like a brittle stick : the inside of our dwelling, particularly at the windows, was encrusted with a thick coating of rime, formed by the congelation of breath and other vapour.

February was mild even to occasional thaws, and this period was prolific in parhelia, haloes, • &c. We saw one such very curious “child of mist” which I think worthy of mention. Around the moon was a vertical halo, slightly flattened on the upper part, of about forty degrees diameter. On each side of the moon at the outer edges of the ring was a mock or false moon, tolerably well defined, and throwing a ray of light to the eastward. From these extended a continuous and horizontal halo at about thirty-five degrees elevation, in parts very bright ; and at W. by S. another mock-moon was presented in it, also throwing a light to the eastward, but downwards. The sky was much brightened under the vertical ring ; above it was misty, the horizon clear and the wind gentle from west. Our old Indian (the man-eater) prognosticated great cold and strong winds from this appearance.

There are several "articles of belief" in meteorological signs among the Indians and whites who have sojourned long in these regions. For instance, if January be fine or cold, March may be looked for as the reverse, and vice versâ; if, in display of parhelia, the mock-sun is seen to the westward of the true, or, should there be one on each side, if the western sun be last to fade, bad weather is sure to ensue.

The Indians have a sad character for exaggeration. Some who passed our quarters on return from Fort Norman brought doleful news of death and starvation.—"An Indian man and woman had been frozen to death near Fort Norman; many were dying of starvation, and the Fort was full of people in a like condition." Fortunately Mr. MacKenzie had written a note by them which I received next day, and found that a few had reached Fort Norman without food; a woman had died from extreme old age and two boys from sickness, upon which foundation their tale had been built up. There was little danger of starvation either to us or the Indians, while the supply of fish remained so plentiful. We had used four small nets from the end of November, and found at the end of February, that we had eighteen hundred fish "en c  che;" our consumption,

for dogs and all included, having been about fifty a day. Two men arriving from Fort Norman for a supply of fresh fish, those in store having become really too gamy, I resolved to return with them, being desirous to hear from Mr. Pullen to whom I had written by the winter express. With a latent yearning after dandyism which was, it must be owned, rather out of place, I desired to have my hair cut, and this operation was performed by means of a knife and a board, for scissors were wanting; the result exceeded that of parish barbers, who clip the crowns of charity children by contract and the hundred. On the 21st of February, at sunrise, the two men of the Fort and myself started from "New Fort Franklin" (the title by which our palatial residence was dignified) each driving a dog-sledge laden in all with upwards of six hundred fish. After crossing Bear Lake and following the trail into the woods on the opposite shore, we encountered two Indians who said that they were starving; we gave a fish to each as a stay until they should reach the lake. An hour later we met another whose tale and supply were as before. Four or five hours after, we found two women with each a couple of children, encamped by the wayside; they also clamorously assailed us for relief and received some fish.

Great is the aid of snow-shoes ; the journey which in November occupied my party six days was now accomplished easily in three. I remained with Mr. MacKenzie until the arrival of the return express men from Fort Simpson, who brought letters from Mr. Pullen and the gentleman of the station, by which we learned all were well. My companion again enlivened me with much interesting conversation respecting the Indians, and I put much reliance in his information as his acquaintance with them was very extensive and familiar. They have an idea of a supreme being but do not worship him, and have an evil spirit, but it is doubtful whether they maintained this view until the advent of the whites. There are also numerous ideal personages who are supposed either to have performed super-human works (as Wiskaytchach and his reproduction of the world after the flood), or who had or have some influential power over them. But although they put great faith in the legendary lore, the heroes are regarded with little reverence or awe. The medicine-men or conjurors have immense power among these dwellers in moral darkness ; they are considered almost infallible, and if their predictions fail, the non-success is attributed to some defect in the medicine, either that it was not strong enough,

or that some form was omitted in its preparation. The office seems to be druidical in its tendency ; much has to be gone through by the neophyte before he can be initiated into its mysteries, which are conducted with much secrecy. It is certainly an important and valuable office ; none but the privileged can " make medicine or venture to predict ;" ridicule and failure would be sure to follow such attempt. These are the doctors of the tribes ; they are acquainted with many herbal and mineral remedies, among which are emetics, and cures for spasms, also plants for staunching blood, and of healing properties. A favourite prescription is the use of the vapour-bath, and from my slight knowledge of their habits, I should think that many of their disorders may be removed by aqueous visitation.

The patient is placed in a tightly closed tent, wherein are heated stones upon which water is thrown ; after remaining in the bath for awhile it is not unusual to dash right into the ice-cold streams ; nor does this seem to do any harm. Singing is much practised, but it is, though varied, of a very humdrum nature. I heard a good deal of this by our old friend at Bear Lake ;—sometimes he sang or droned for singing's sake ; at others his lay was in a tone of lament for the dusky



dames and their little ones, whose untimely fate himself had hastened, and then he succeeded in being very dismal. When he feasted well or had been fortunate in his trapping results, he sang in notes of rejoicing, and that his good luck might be repeated, and sometimes he certainly sang devotionally, but to what power I am quite in the dark. Talking of the dark, that was his favourite time for this sort of devotional exercise: I have often been awakened in the dead hour, by the not very musical emanations of the old gentleman, who when his solo was concluded, generally rose and took an extensive smoke, besides alleviating an unfortunate irritation of the skin which occurs among Indians, nearly as much as with the Tuski, and from the same *causes*.

Infanticide, which was at no distant period universally prevalent as regarded the female children, appears to have much diminished; the "Slaves" have the worst character for this crime, which it is to be hoped will soon cease entirely.

The medicine-men must be tolerably clever fellows if their aptitude reach the pitch for which they have credit. When one is about to conjure, a tent is constructed of poles, inclining to each other at the top, which are encircled by hoops at

different heights, and the whole is then covered with leather, when it presents a shape like the frustum of a sugar-loaf. The top is open, and to the upper hoop is stitched a blanket, which falls down as a funnel: this is to admit the spirits which are evoked, but I could not learn what were their attributes, except that there is one which seems to have power over the rest, is an evil being, and puts an end to the proceedings by appearing without summons and driving off the other creatures of air. The medicine-man goes into the tent before the skin covering is finally sewn on, and begins to sing away at a great rate, the house at the same time shaking with violence, so much so as sometimes to fall down; this, it is supposed, is done by the spirits, and certainly the conjurors must be very expert: in some instances they have permitted themselves to be bound hand and foot, wrapped in a net and thus thrown into the tent, which has immediately begun to shake, and in a very brief space the net and bonds were ejected from the tent without a knot having been untied. For their enemies they are said to possess terrible medicines, the effect of one being to distort the features to one side—probably paralysis by poison—of another, to render the skin perfectly blue, like the result of nitrate of silver.

Of war and its practices I did not hear a great deal, but learned that the ordeal previous to admission as a warrior in some tribes still rules; the young men of the Dahcotah or Sioux tribes must be able to bear torture without flinching before they can be allowed to serve. One trial consists in dragging a buffalo's head round the camp by a cord thrust through the muscles at the hips.

April brought the first signs of spring, and a warm south wind occasionally, and speedily diminished the snow, which was about four feet deep; the birds appeared from the woods, into whose recesses they had retired for shelter during the extreme cold, and shrubs became pliant during noonday, some even showing signs of vegetation. Early in the month two Indian boys came from Bear Lake bringing me intelligence that some of the seamen were attacked with illness, and that one of the Indian women, whom we had relieved with fish on our journey hither, had died from the effects of exposure and famine. Of course I hastened to visit the party, and found the trip to Bear Lake full of interest in the comparisons to be drawn betwixt winter and dawning spring. The snow had fallen from the trees, and left many pointed surfaces of rock or earth uncovered; numbers of wood-peckers maintained a continual tapping, for

under the bark of decayed pines they find abundance of worms : some trees were curiously marked by their bills, scarcely an inch of their surfaces being left untouched. During the early part of the day we walked without snow-shoes, a good crust having formed on the ice, but the noonday sun in softening the track compelled their adoption. I had the misfortune to cut my foot severely with an axe the morning after we started, and only continued the journey as a lesser evil than those of delaying my companions by their return with me, or retracing my steps alone, which, in case of great loss of blood or other accident, might be of fatal consequence. So we bandaged up the wound, and I donned my mocassin, determined to make light of the disaster, although blood welled from the gash, and, penetrating through blanket-socks and mocassins, congealed upon the snow-shoe. I suffered long and severely by this accident, the considerable walking (above a hundred miles) irritated the wound, and on the return journey to Fort Norman the snow had so much melted that we had frequently to march ankle or even knee deep in ice water ; this of course was very bad, and for some time nothing would excite the hurt to sensation.

On arrival at New Fort Franklin, I found several of the party very unwell, and all pale and delicate-

looking,—no doubt, in consequence of their uniform diet of fish, to which I had now however brought a most welcome change in the shape of a large case of pemmican. The tale we had heard of the Indian woman was true. After parting with us on the day when we had given her and others some fish, she had arrived on the shore of Bear Lake, about four miles from the hut, and encamped there with several other Indians for about three weeks : during this time she became very ill, and, being unable to accompany her *friends*, was deserted by them—her father and brothers among the rest, the latter telling her that they left her there to die. Some of the women who had been encamped with her, had been employed to net snow-shoes for my party, and the Indian boy going over to fetch some which had been left, found the poor creature, with her two little ones, alone, without either fire or food. Le Canard, alias the Cannibal, was immediately despatched to help her over to the hut, and was obliged to drag her across the lake on his snow-shoes, as she was perfectly helpless. The party then built her a small lodge, and did all in their power to help her ; they cut wood for her fire and prepared her food, using a case of concentrated gravy-soup which I had always reserved for an occasion of illness of any of the party. Their cares, however,

were unavailing ; in ten days she died, after frequently asking for “ Be-cah-dre-ahzee,” or the “ little Master,” meaning myself, whom she well recollected. The Indians who were near, deserted the locality immediately on her decease ; and the men, headed by Taylor the fisherman, a good-hearted and dry specimen of the Orkney Islands, who had been fourteen years in the country, proceeded to make a “ c  che ” on the brow of the hill behind the hut, wherein they deposited the emaciated corpse, and, as customary, the few articles she possessed. The worthy fellows now took the children under their care ; the poor little creatures had been frightfully burned, having several times fallen into the fire, and from their tender age been unable to extricate themselves ; but they were with attention restored, and the little girl was consigned to an Indian family, the boy remaining with the men until their departure.* After a stay of two days, I started on return to Fort Norman, the journey occupying this time only two and a half days with loaded sledges. We had hidden some dried meat in the snow on our journey to the lake, but the ravens had discovered and appropriated it ; they are

* I have since learned with great regret that these children perished in the winter of 1851-2, during a scarcity of provision. This sad occurrence was prognosticated at the time of my visit by Le Canard, who certainly was well qualified to give an opinion on this subject.

most daring and clever pilferers. My companions were two men of Fort Norman, both half castes : one of them belonged to the Colony founded by Lord Selkirk on the Red River, and his ideas of highly civilised life were rather primitive, rendering our conversations sufficiently amusing to me in consequence ; among other questions propounded were whether our gracious Queen ever visited poor people, and if all the soldiers lived in the palace with her Majesty.

Snow-birds were seen on the 24th of April, the first and early arrivals of migrating birds : some which were shot were very fat ; their condition is considered a criterion of that of the wild-fowl. Ducks arrived on the 4th of May ; geese and swans later : they were all in very fair condition, and a truly welcome addition to our meagre fare.

The party which had remained at Bear Lake rejoined me on the 8th of May, by which time the snow had greatly decreased, and much water appeared upon the river-ice ; and on the 13th the ice commenced to break up and pass down : there were, however, many stoppages by which the current was impeded to such an extent that the river rose about five and twenty feet, and flooded the country ; the fort was surrounded with water, and we brought our

boat into the court-yard to the doors of the dwellings ; all the fences and much fuel were carried off, and large masses of ice floated around, some of which remained when the obstruction of the channel was removed and the river had free passage again ; had the water continued to rise much longer the fort would probably have been carried off.* On the 22nd, Doctor John Rae, the well-known Arctic voyager, at that time in charge of the Mackenzie River District, came down from Fort Simpson on his way to Fort Good Hope, which is visited every year, on the breaking up of the ice, by the Head of the District. I cannot forbear to offer a tribute to his courteous and delicate attention ; further acquaintance engendered sentiments of great esteem for his many excellent qualities. On the 24th, my party started for Fort Simpson, and we rejoined Mr. Pullen at that place on the 1st of June.

We noted on the journey the enormous force exerted by the river when obstructed in its passage on the disruption of the ice : it had in many places risen to a great height, and here enormous masses and great quantities of ice had been deposited along the banks. Where abrupt points occurred it was piled to

* This actually happened next year, 1851, nearly everything being swept away, and the station is now removed to the bank of Bear River.

the height frequently of forty or fifty feet. We espied one or two bears, but did not kill any ; a very nice chance was lost by my lending an Indian my double-barrel to go in chase : he got within shot of Mr. Bruin, and pulled the trigger, but the gun was at half-cock only, and he either feared or did not know how to cock it, and came back with a very blank visage, whose aspect was not improved by our merriment at his stupidity.

We were very glad to reach this place, where, for the first time since separating from Mr. Pullen (a period of ten months), we enjoyed the luxury of a comfortable bed, having scarcely ever during that time taken off our clothes for nightly repose. I saw here a dance of the Slave Indians, a most uninteresting spectacle, although there were many performers. The dancers moved round and round in a circle, their feet shuffling along in the "take close order" style ; some moved their feet only, others swayed their bodies and arms to and fro, and one or two waved eagles' wings above their heads ; several women were among the performers ; they were, if possible, less animated than the men. All kept up a monotonous chant of the most dismal tendency—"he he, he, he ; ha ha ; he he ; ho ho, ho ho ; he, he, he," &c., which was their only music, and the whole proceeding was so very "slow,"

that it soon exhausted my small stock of patience, and I departed, but understood that the amusement was continued for several hours, probably for the sake of exercise.

On the 8th of June, three gentlemen of the company arrived from the posts on the West Branch or Liard River, which falls into the Mackenzie just above Fort Simpson. One of these, a Mr. P., had suffered almost incredible privations during the past winter, the two men who were with him having died from starvation. The details are heartrending, horrible, and even revolting.

Pelly Banks station, where the catastrophe occurred, is situated upon the Pelly river, about 1000 miles distant from Fort Simpson. The Pelly joins the Lewis at Fort Selkirk, 310 miles from Pelly Banks, the united stream forming the river Youcon. In the spring of 1848, Mr. P. was ordered to this post, and remained at that or the Francis Lake station close to it during the summer with two men, when they often had a scarcity of food, but endured no severe privation. Mr. O'Brien arrived at Francis Lake about the middle of October, 1851, having been obliged to send thirteen men in a boat, out of eighteen men and two boats, back to head-quarters in consequence of the lateness of the season and state of the waters. There were now seven

men and two officers at the post, with scarcely any food coming in, and they were reduced to eating moose, rein-deer, bear, and beaver skins ; half a moose skin being the allowance for six men for one day. It may be considered how little food they had, from the fact that Mr. O'Brien started in the spring of 1849 for Fort Halkett, 410 miles distant, with five men and only four days' provision, eking out the remainder of their subsistence by their guns. During the following summer Mr. P., with two white men and an engaged Indian, managed to live tolerably on the produce of their guns and nets ; but at the latter end of August food again began to be scarce, and they anxiously looked forward to the arrival of the annual boats from Fort Simpson with stores, ammunition, &c. for the Indian trade. To their deep disappointment none arrived. Having, therefore, no means of barter, and this intelligence quickly spreading amongst the Indians, nothing in the shape of provisions was brought in by the Indians, with the exception of sixteen pounds of meat and six marmots. To add to their misery, the Fort took fire late in November, and was burned down : thus nearly all remaining resources in store, including most of the furs, were destroyed, a little powder and some furs only being saved. Having eaten up everything to the very pack or

He went out, but could discover no trace of it; and, coming in, sat down by the fire, which was composed of the boards of the house, the poor fellow being too weak to cut up wood. He observed some bones in the fireplace, and momentary suspicions of a frightful nature crossed his mind, but these were speedily dissipated by the remark made by the man, that these were the bones of deer, &c., which had, in past time, fallen through the chinks of the boards, and had been picked up when the flooring was taken for firewood. After cutting wood and fetching water enough to last until he should return, Mr. P. went off, determining again to seek his food rather than deprive his companion of the remaining furs, and hoping that he might perchance get through the season on them. He repaired to the lodge of the Indian, who had been to the Fort since the death of the other man, and on Mr. P. expressing his wonder that the body was not to be found, the Indian replied, "Is it possible, my father, that you do not know what has become of it? did you not see the bones in the fireplace?" Mr. P. replied, that the survivor had told him that those were bones picked from under the floor. "My father," was the answer, "I am an Indian, yet I know that the live man has eaten the dead. Deers' bones I know, and the bones of all other beasts I know.

Those were none such: they were the bones of a human being; for when I went to the house I also saw those bones in the ashes, and received a like answer to yours, but, taking a piece of skin and putting it to roast at the fire, I let it fall as if by accident, then raking among the ashes with a stick, I turned the bones over, and saw that they were certainly those of a human being. My father, I am an Indian; yet, trust what I say, one has eaten the other." In five days, according to promise, Mr. P. returned to the Fort, having existed meanwhile on an occasional partridge or rabbit. On entering the house he found the poor fellow lying before the fire, totally unable to help himself, and now told him that, since he found him so weak, henceforward, "live or die, he would leave him no more." He managed to shoot a raven for him, and went to fetch wood and water, and to try for some game. Returning sooner than was expected, and opening the door quickly and wide, as had lately been his custom, he saw the kettle on the fire, and on inquiry, was answered that it contained merely water; but, going to the pot, he saw that it held something more—and, searching the inside of the kettle, horrible to tell, drew out a whole liver. Paralyzed by this dreadful sight, he could not speak, while the poor starving wretch, now discovered in the

commission of the horrid deed, cowered down on the hearth, and dared not lift his eyes to meet those of his fellow sufferer. Of him amazement, grief, loathing, yet withal pity, took possession alternately ; poor fellow ! not equally low with his companion, probably because less desponding and more robust in constitution, weak, and starving as he was, the revolting sight overcame him, and he rushed into the open air for relief. Compassion for the poor wretch led him again to re-enter the house, but, unable to speak, he commenced hewing a log. His unfortunate companion asked him, however, what was the matter—why did he rush so wildly out ? “ Will you now confess,” said Mr. P., “ that you have been eating poor Dubois ? ” The miserable being slowly and fearfully acknowledged that such was the case, and pleaded that not alone the love of life (and oh ! when life is fleeting, then is the love for it the strongest)—not the love of life alone incited him to the deed, but that he wished to live—aye !—mark it well—that his aged mother might not be deprived of her sole support, her only stay.

Mr. P. now procured wood and water sufficient for two days—but he could no longer bear to remain : the thought of this deed haunted him like a fate, and he departed, promising to return in two days. The

skeleton before him prayed and entreated him not to go, not again to leave him all lone and solitary. But he could not stay, poison was in the very atmosphere for him. He went, and in two days returned again, and throwing the door open quickly as usual—"what a sight presented itself!" The man, or what had once been a man, lay dead upon the hearth, stiff and cold, a skin-covered frame of bones. The fire had burnt out for lack of fuel, and beside the corpse was the kettle, whose contents had so lately confirmed his frightful suspicions. It was now perfectly empty—flesh, broth—all utterly consumed.

The wretched being had met his final death-stroke in a surfeit of the horrible repast.

Mr. P. took the body outside the Fort and laid it "*en c  che*;" then writing two letters, one for Whites, the other for Indians, he took himself to a distance and there encamped. For nearly three weeks he dragged on a poor existence with skins and some little game, and was reduced to the former extremity, when the brother of the engaged Indian arrived with some meat for him, hoping 'haply to find him still alive. On meeting, they both shed tears of joy. "My father, my father," said the red man, "is it possible that you are still alive? oh! what delight for us to be able to save you." He said he was not

surprised to find that the other man was dead, having estimated at the last meeting that he would not live ten days longer. .

“There was little rest for the kettle that night,” and next morning the Indian started off to return to his brother, and stop him from drying the meat he had. On the following morning Mr. P. departed also for the camp, and when arrived soon recovered a little strength. After a fortnight’s stay he returned to the Fort and encamped opposite to it, as he had now some meat to live upon ; but an old woman, whom he had succoured on the road, arrived shortly after and remained at the camp, so that there was not a large share for each. Seven days after his arrival, Mr. S. with three men came in ; two of these being Indians, returned to Fort Selkirk, the others with Mr. P. starting next day for Fort Halkett : having only forty pounds of pemmican for the journey, they had therefore to depend mainly upon their guns ; they were fortunately all good shots, and wild fowl were in abundance.

Some of Mr. P.’s stratagems to obtain food during the winter were sufficiently ingenious, for he had very little shot, although powder enough. At one time he looped a partridge with a long pole and a snare (these birds are very tame in extreme cold) ; on

another occasion he shot a squirrel with a piece of green stick, and, the hammer of his gun being broken, fired with a piece of birch fungus, used as tinder, having first tried a lighted stick, which diverted his aim.

CHAPTER XX.

Leave Fort Simpson.—Ascent of Mackenzie.—Receive Admiralty Despatches.—Mr. Pullen promoted.—Return to Fort Simpson.—The “Logan” and “Try Again.”—Departure for the Sea Coast.—Point Separation.—Tiny Tormentors.—A diminutive Gourmand.—Re-enter the Arctic Ocean.—Garry Island.—Ice Blink.—Pelly Island.—A change of Climate.—Discover New Islands.—An Esquimaux Hamlet.—Vexatious Impediments.—Scheme of Voyage.—Heavy Ice.—An Esquimaux Nurse.—Cape Bathurst, Meeting with Esquimaux.—The Bear Hunt.—Progress checked by Ice.—Friendly demeanour and Pilfering tendencies of Esquimaux.—Lose Indians.—Conjectures.—Indians return.

DR. RAE returned from the lower posts on the 10th of June, and on the 20th, half of the “Mackenzie River Brigade,” consisting of four large boats laden with furs, started from Fort Simpson, *en route* for Methy Portage, the other half having departed some days before. The “Plover’s” boat expedition accompanied this brigade, expecting to return to England, by way of Hudson’s Bay. We continued the ascent of the Mackenzie,—principally, as usual, by tracking, starting generally at two or three in the morning and encamping at nine,* for at this season there is constant daylight. On the 25th of June,

when near Great Slave Lake, we were met by two Indians in a canoe who proved to be bearers of an "extraordinary express" from England, which contained Mr. Pullen's commission as Commander and the sanction of the Admiralty to renewed prosecution of the search for Sir John Franklin's party, if Captain Pullen should consider it practicable. Very little consideration was necessary on the subject, and after consultation with Dr. Rae, the decision was speedily arrived at, to return to the sea-coast. We reached the fishing-station called Big Island, at the entrance of Great Slave Lake, where some of our party had wintered, next day, and attempted to reach Fort Resolution to obtain a supply of pemmican, but the ice in the lake checked our progress, and Captain Pullen decided on returning at once to Fort Simpson, to prepare for the second trip. On the 29th, accordingly, we bade farewell to Dr. Rae and his brigade, and retraced our way to Fort Simpson, which was reached on the 3rd of July.

The boats which we had brought from the "Plover" were so much damaged that only one, the "Logan," (repaired from the other) could be made available, and we were furnished by the company with a large new boat, whose dimensions were in strong contrast to our own diminutive craft; she measured thirty

feet on the keel, forty "over all," and was nine feet broad. She was christened "Try Again," in reference to our new attempt, in preparations for which we were busy enough for several days. On the 11th we quitted Fort Simpson, and halting for a night at Fort Norman, where my old friend and fisherman, Taylor, was in charge, reached Fort Good Hope on the 16th, and were kindly welcomed by Mr. McBeath, who was greatly surprised at our appearance. We resumed our descent of the river next day, re-crossed the Arctic circle during the night, and halted on the morrow at Point Separation for observations, and to take up the pemmican left here by Sir John Richardson in 1848. On the previous day we had met a party of Loucheux who informed us with much boasting that they had met Esquimaux near Point Separation a short time since, and had a battle with them: the true particulars of this dastardly affair were only made known to us on our return, and will be mentioned by and by. Mosquitos and "bull-dogs" (i. e., gad-flies,) had long been troublesome, but here they were particularly harassing; the latter were in such numbers that they literally blackened the mainsail of the "Try Again," hoisted to shelter us from the blazing noon-day sun which raised the thermometer to nearly 100°, the temperature being

84° in the shade. Apart from the great annoyance of the mosquitos, it was curious to notice one of these little torments settle upon one's skin, and how its shrunk carcase distended to quadruple its original size as it gorged itself with blood, the crimson fluid showing plainly beneath, until at last it became almost incapable of flight. Each one of these tiny creatures will extract a large drop of blood, so that where they are numerous one may suffer considerably by their homœopathic phlebotomy as well as by the distressing irritation they produce.

After quitting Point Separation on the 20th, we followed the easternmost channel of the delta, and found the mosquitos ten times worse than ever. We unfortunately landed near a swamp in the hope of finding a moose, and took myriads more of our persecutors into the boats on re-embarking; a smoky fire had no effect in persuading them to quit their well-relished sanguineous fare, and they were so thick that our joking tars declared they checked the boat's progress down the stream: but the reality was no joke; little sleep was obtainable, for to enfold one's self in blankets was to be tormented with heat, and in remaining uncovered one received a thousand tiny stings until the nerves became almost insupportably excited.

On the morning of the 22nd, the Arctic ocean was

displayed once more to our view, with a strong yellow ice-blink on the horizon which did not promise much for a clear sea. We landed on Garry Island to dine, and had a fine view from its highest part. To the north and west a nearly unbroken line of ice appeared, and a strong blink gave token of ice to the S. W.; N. E. only was clear of ice and dotted with numerous islands and sandy patches.

The abruptness of the change in temperature upon quitting the Mackenzie was truly surprising; instantly on our emerging from the channel the almost tropical heat we had previously experienced was replaced by cutting fog and a chilling atmosphere, and we jumped from light clothing into heavy winter habiliments.

Pelly Island was reached in the evening, and we encamped on its northern shores, having found the water shallow on the western side. At midnight, when the sun, though near to, did not disappear below the horizon, the pack was about three miles off, driving to the southward; amongst it were some large hummocks and heavy floes. In some small lakes on the island our two Indian hunters—who, with other additions and some exchanges, increased our party to seventeen persons—found a great number of geese with their young: the old ones were moulting and fell an easy prey to the guns:

about forty were captured, and made—although very thin—an acceptable addition to our ordinary meagre fare, and as we could catch no fish they were doubly acceptable. The western face of the island is formed of high banks, broken down and overhanging; at its northern extreme are steep mud cliffs, apparently from thirty to forty feet high, and cut by ice within five feet of the top. To the eastward it terminates in a long gravel spit.

On the 23rd some new islands were discovered, but we had not then leisure to fix their positions with accuracy, and a few bearings sufficed. Kendall Island was our resting place this night, and here our hunters managed to bring down a deer which we estimated to weigh about 160 pounds clear of offal. The higher parts of all these islands resemble arable land lying fallow, so much are they cracked and riven by the intense cold. Flowers are in some spots numerous and of considerable variety, but all very diminutive; no trees or shrubs are to be met with, a species of cotton creeper, whose stem is not larger than one's little finger, being the largest production. There were innumerable marmot holes; the men were chasing these little animals throughout the night. A few ptarmigan were also seen upon the hills. The soil is all fine black mould, with

neither stones nor shells. Placing a tide-stick at night we found next morning a rise and fall of about a foot. We encamped on Richard Island on the 24th, and here killed another deer which afforded luxurious feasting. In the evening of the 25th, landing for a short time near Toker Point, we found a number of Esquimaux winter dwellings; they were built of driftwood and sods of turf or mud; on a ground-plan they formed three sides of a cross, the roofs were nearly orange-shaped but rather more peaked, with a hole in the centre to let out the smoke; the apartments were raised about four feet from the ground, the entrance being from below through a sort of trap-hatch. Near the huts were several covered pits containing whale and seal bladders of oil, and upon light scaffolds around were disposed several articles of native manufacture. At first we thought the village was entirely deserted, but a tiny footprint freshly made in the sand refuted the supposition. We hung a knife, scissors, some beads and tobacco to one of the stages, together with a rude hieroglyphic scratched upon a board, to assure the Esquimaux of our friendly intentions, then re-embarked and continued our journey. Becoming entangled in the pack, we gained the beach in Hutchinson's Bay with difficulty, and

were here detained for three days of very great discomfort, having landed on a low, marshy spot, with no other shelter than sieve-like tents from melting snow and heavy rains, and with rotten wood only for fires. We got away on the 29th, but the day was expended in toilsome endeavours to force a passage through the ice, which lay in flat pieces or fields, several acres in extent, and seven or eight feet thick, or rose in masses twenty or thirty feet high, like so many houses in ruins.

It is difficult for inexperience to conceive how greatly chilled the wind becomes in its passage over ice. Here, in the month of July, a south breeze, which should have been the softest and warmest exhalation of Æolus, stagnated the blood by its frost-becharged breath. In the morning we had forced through the pack which belted the shore, hoping to find an open sea, and at night succeeded only with great toil and some danger in regaining the land, which was right welcome after our disagreeable day. Nearly sixteen hours in open boats, with thickly driving fogs which wetted as badly as rain, and encrusted the masts and rigging with ice, while toes and noses complained sadly, made us duly appreciate our midnight bivouac. We had now reached Point M'Kinley, upon which was another Esquimaux village, but

most of the huts were falling to ruins, and apparently, long desolate. Wandering about the settlement, we observed the frames of one or two oomiaks and kiaks, some harpoons having stone heads bound on with sinews of the seal, paddles double and single bladed, wooden scoops and ladles, pits for blubber, pieces of wood drilled for producing fire, and the bones of some small whales. There was also the carcase of a wolf, which had, apparently, died from starvation. A trifling circumstance occurred here which gave us a hearty laugh; a young seal got entangled in the nets which we had laid out, and the fisherman—a Canadian, who had never visited the sea before—imagined he saw some horrible monster, and let it go in affright. We were detained for two days at this place: the ice surrounded the point and entirely checked our advance. We had hoped to be at Cape Bathurst by the end of July, the 1st of August only saw us departing from this spot.

The plan upon which the present trip to the sea had been undertaken may be briefly sketched as follows:—It was hoped that the season being favourable, the expedition, descending the Mackenzie, would reach the sea about the 23rd of July, and gain Cape Bathurst in a few days. Thence it was intended to strike right across for Banks' Land, a distance of

rather more than 300 miles : this accomplished, future operations would have to depend upon the contingencies then arising.

It was not our good fortune to achieve this grand undertaking ; the season was, as regarded ourselves, most unfortunate : a succession of northerly winds drove the ice down upon the shores, along which we had to pass, and our days were frittered away in vexatious detentions or useless toil amongst rugged ice masses and shallow waters.

Near Cape Dalhousie, on the 3rd of August, we encountered the largest ice we had yet seen, and mounted to the top of one of the hummocks, fifty or sixty feet high, to look round ; as from the boats our view was very contracted, and the ice being so closely packed that but few "lanes" were visible. In the evening we had to break through the pack to regain the shore, an occupation of three hours' severest labour, though the neck through which we strove to pass was not more than five hundred yards broad, but the ice was in large fields, or jointed together and under-tongued, and being all in motion required great management. We remained at Cape Dalhousie, which is on an island, during the 4th, and reached Nicholson's Island next evening, having in the run observed some grampuses, a few seals, and quantities

of ducks, which latter made a great uproar and commotion. Nicholson's Island is high in some parts, I should think 150 to 200 feet above the sea. Partridges were in great numbers but very wild; besides these there was nothing to be found except mushrooms, which were very plentiful and excellent. The evening of the 6th saw us at Maitland Island: here we found two Esquimaux women, an old and a young one, the first of the tribe seen on the trip. They were dreadfully frightened, and chattered away unceasingly, making signs for us to depart. Conciliatory gestures, however, soon calmed their fears, and the elder dame speedily became very friendly—perhaps, indeed, a little too familiar, as they were horribly dirty both in person and dress. There was a little difference in their costume to those we had seen to the westward of the Mackenzie; the younger woman had her hair bound up in immense bows at the back of the head; she wore a frock of seal-skin, with pointed ends, tight breeches, and boots of the same material. She had an infant which she always carried with her: its wardrobe was very scanty indeed, but a large stock of clothes was, apparently, unnecessary, as it was generally snugly ensconced inside of its mother's frock next to her skin, and secured from slipping

down by means of a greasy leather cord which she wore as a girdle. The lullaby of an Esquimaux nurse is a performance curious as original. Having disposed of her infant in the manner just described, the mother goes about her other avocations, which are always calling for performance, and while so engaged, should the diminutive burden finding its position troublesome, or perhaps slightly oppressive, presume to utter cries of discontent, it is very summarily hushed into silence. The mother moves from one foot to the other, at the same time striking the poor infant with either hand alternately, and drawling monotonously the universal *Hi Yangah* chant of the Esquimaux, than which few things could be invented less devoid of animation or interest. No wonder the hapless babe ceases its puerile lamentations on the instant. Our Indians (who had never before seen Esquimaux) did not at all comprehend the specimens before them, particularly on the question of sex, nor can this be a matter of surprise; their aspects were decidedly unfeminine, and so were their—it must out—pantalons. Quitting Point Maitland on the morning of the 8th, we crossed Harrowby Bay, and in the afternoon, when approaching Cape Bathurst, observed twelve Esquimaux tents, some of large size, surrounded by crowds of natives. Nearly



twenty kiaks and several oomiaks pushed off from the shore, the women, with which the latter were crowded, shouting and vociferating in high glee. Their disorderly merriment knew no bounds, and although they appeared to entertain only friendly sentiments, it was necessary to repress a too great familiarity. We were quite overwhelmed by their amicable demonstrations; the single boats hung upon the gunwales of our craft, the oomiaks got athwart our bows, and the crews of each threw in pell mell meat, fish, skins, dresses, or whatever else they possessed. These were, however, all rejected; we consented to receive only upon barter, but even on this point had some embarrassment, one of the dames being about to despatch her husband to us with her infant, either as a present, or in exchange for some coveted commodity. We landed to dine in a small bay at some distance from the camp; the men only accompanied us hither, the women and children in their oomiaks having returned to their tents. The very friendly demeanour of our new acquaintances seemed to render all precaution unnecessary; but we had learned a grave lesson on our first trip, and were always very guarded in our intercourse with Esquimaux. Here, while we dined, a boundary line was drawn according to our custom upon the sand, but it was too far from our

position to please our friends; they drew another nearer, to which they then advanced, but not a foot passed beyond it, and all united in a song, one of them leading, beating time with his knife and spoon in place of a drum, and moving his feet also to the measure. I now for the first time heard words in the song, and these were apparently not improvised, as the whole party took up the same word at every pause, but the refrain was the old original, Hi Yangah, yah, rah.

By the time that we had concluded our meal and embarked, the oomiaks had rejoined us, now bearing tents and all possessions, for it does not take an Esquimaux family long to remove their summer mansion and change their residence. We encamped in the evening upon the larger of the Baillie Islands, and were very sorry to find heavy ice crowding its shores, and, by the reports of the Esquimaux, of whom about ten 'men remained with us, it would entirely impede our passage to the eastward. During this day we saw two black whales, the first seen on the trip.

These Esquimaux were very intelligent: vivacious curiosity replaced the apathetic air which I had generally noticed in others of the tribe; each and every of our proceedings was investigated with a view to its

comprehension, and a ready talent for mimicry was displayed. Writing puzzled our friends wonderfully, a number of them sat in our tent watching me as I wrote, looking alternately at the characters, my pen, fingers, and face, as if to seek the clue to the mystery by their connection.' We pushed on along the shore of the island for some time on the 9th, but were much encumbered by the heavy ice, and finally becoming completely checked by it, landed, and encamped anew. On nearing the shore we saw a huge bear trot off from the beach; our hunters went in chase, but without seeing him, and we gave up all hope of Bruin's reappearance. A number of the Esquimaux, of both sexes, joined us here, and were friendly as ever: they had predicted that we should not be able to proceed any further at present, and a view of the sea to the north and east too truly confirmed their statement. Ice rugged, massive and compact, lay like a forest of crystal pinnacles close down upon, and around the islands, extending to seaward, far as the vision ranged. In the afternoon an Esquimaux woman joined us who had seen the bear on the top of the island, and in her fright had taken to the soft mud banks, through which she had trudged middle deep. She was in a pretty pickle; but we ungallantly paid less attention to her condition

than to the information she brought, and the united forces of Esquimaux and Whites turned out in pursuit of the hirsute quadruped.

The brute was discovered on a huge mass of ice, which, with others, had grounded at some distance from the beach ; one party started in the " Logan " to cut off his retreat by sea ; another, which I joined, made for the summit of the bank, which we hoped he would endeavour to ascend. First blood was drawn by our party ; a ball from my fowling-piece struck him in the shoulder, and he fell for an instant on the ice and began to suck his paw, which made us think it was there he had been wounded. Speedily rising, he ran on along the hummock, taking to the water and climbing the sides of the masses of ice with the utmost indifference and ease. Our hunters (Indians are always excellent marksmen) now paid him some attention ; they hit him several times, but did not succeed in turning him : he attempted at last to swim to seaward, and would doubtless have succeeded, but for a new opponent. One of the Esquimaux, launching his kiak, followed the bear, and at close proximity discharged arrow after arrow into his body. This was the most exciting part of the hunt. Each time that an arrow pierced its body the poor animal seized the missile, if within reach, in its teeth, and

strove to wrench it from the wound, generally however breaking it short : then would it turn fiercely on its persecutor, who, skilfully manœuvring his light boat, hung at two or three yards' distance only on his rear ; so close were they indeed that the man deliberately splashed water with his double-bladed paddle into poor Bruin's face, just backing gently to be clear of his paws, a single stroke from which would quite have reversed the fortune of the combat : when, after a hunt, which lasted about four hours, the animal received its final death stroke by a ball through the brain from the " Logan : " he was stuck all over with arrows, and looked like a barbecued pig. By the laws of savage venery, first blood always decides the captor, and the Esquimaux readily recognised the rule in the present instance, indicating that the prize belonged to the Kabloonan. Of course the carcase was divided, but I stipulated for, and obtained, the skin, which I still possess as a trophy. An hour afterwards I ate a bear steak. The Esquimaux who had so importantly contributed to the capture was rewarded with a large broad dagger (a very awkward weapon in his hands) and some other trifling presents, and was delighted with his good fortune. This little episode served to while away part of the time of our vexatious delay ; the Esquimaux were constantly with

us, and never showed the slightest signs of unfriendliness. They were, however, most expert thieves, and we had many a laugh at their efforts to victimise us in this way. One fellow put a silver spoon up his sleeve, another buried the frying-pan (ah, cruel attempt), and a third joker was detected endeavouring to smuggle away about his person one of the fishing nets (only 40 fathoms long). Our pockets were as much the property of our friends as of ourselves, but the most extraordinary circumstance of all was that when upon missing any article we inquired for it among our friends, it was immediately restored. I suppose they only desired to take care of our goods for us.

On the 10th we quitted the island and encamped on the main land a few miles from the Cape. There was a tent here containing an Esquimaux man and four women; they approached us with some slight hesitation, but became reassured by our conciliatory words and gestures, and by the distribution of presents. We had brought some vermilion with us, knowing the partiality evinced for this material, and I now bedaubed the faces of our friends in artistic style.

After dinner we endeavoured to beat up for Cape Bathurst, and on passing abreast of the East and

smaller Baillic Islands, observed upon it twenty tents, surrounded by Esquimaux, who took to their boats and surrounded us in crowds, with shouts and screams of delight. Indeed our visit appeared to cause quite a festival. The elders of the party warned us that we should find no passage, but they nevertheless lent their aid in guiding us towards the Cape, leading the way in their kiaks, and sounding with their paddles to indicate the channel, for here shoals run out a long distance from the mainland towards the islands. Gaining with difficulty, by tortuous winding through heavy masses of rugged ice, a position on the northern side of the spit lying under the Cape, we had a full view of the impossibility of a present advance,—

“The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around.”

Pressing down upon the shore of the island, upon the spit, the Cape, and into Franklin Bay, it spread thence to seaward in masses heaped tumultuously, sparkling and shimmering in the sunshine, each crystallised point evolving hues of the prism. Not a lane, not a breach appeared; a barrier as of stone lay between us and our desired route. We remained in the neighbourhood for several days, watching if perhaps a

favourable turn of wind or current might drive the ice off shore and afford a passage for advance. But such good fortune was not ours, and it was at length resolved to turn our boats' heads once more towards the Mackenzie. Those who have fixed their ardent hopes on the attainment of some distant goal, who in the pursuit have unheedingly encountered toil, privation, weariness, and countless inconveniences, and who have finally been forced to relinquish their desires, will be able to enter into the sentiments of chagrin and disappointment which possessed our souls when "to return" was spoken.

During our sojourn here the Esquimaux were constantly with us, and accepted without hesitation our friendly professions. No lingering distrust was ever apparent; if the men were absent in the chase by sea or land, the women and children were around and about us in unrestrained communication, and affording us all the assistance in their power. Their curiosity and pilfering propensities were the only annoyances to which we were subjected; of the latter I have already spoken; to satisfy the former we had much ado: our clothes, beads, and possessions, were all unsparingly handled, and the Esquimaux ladies don't always have clean hands. One of the young men of the tribe had a wound in his arm which he

displayed to me, with a request that I would *blow on it*. As it was unclean and festering, I opened it with the lancet, washed and dressed it, and dismissed my patient with assurance of the speedy improvement of the hurt. This did not suffice however; the wounded limb was again extended, and I was entreated to blow upon it, which as it was considered so indispensable to recovery I of course proceeded to do: the man immediately fetched an arrow, which he tendered for my acceptance in return for my friendly offices, and seemed to doubt the efficacy of the charm he had insisted upon my performing when I gently refused his gift.

From causes not clearly explained, our Indian hunters were in perpetual fear of our Esquimaux friends. No doubt the hostility long existing between the races influenced them greatly, and I rather think they had been truly informed respecting the collision which had lately occurred near Point Séparation, and of which some Indians had told us on our descent of the Mackenzie: but, as we subsequently learnt, with details and exaggeration which had completely perverted the aspect of the affair: if this was the case, I do not wonder at their alarm lest the treacherous conduct of their own people should be visited upon them. From whatever cause it occurred, the fact is

certain, that our forest brethren were ever in fear and agitation, during our sojourn among the sea-coast race. They used to go off to hunt, but always together, and never strayed far, so that we were much surprised on the morning of the 13th, to learn that Karias and Louison had been absent all night, having departed on the previous evening in the hope of finding a deer. Greatly puzzled were all to account for their mysterious absence, particularly as the day wore on, and they did not return. Three conjectures divided the opinions of the party:—First, that they had possibly fallen upon the track of deer, and in the ardour of pursuit been carried farther than they intended, or lost the right direction in which to return; but this view was imperatively negatived by some, who urged, and truly, that in their native forests an Indian never by any chance misses his way; they forgot that here the case was widely different; that of the many tokens which, by instinctive and educational observation, guide these children of nature in traversing their own woods, here they had few or none.

The next supposition was, that irresistibly incited by their fears of the Esquimaux, to which we were no strangers, they had suddenly deserted the party with the intention of gaining the banks of the

“Inconnu” River, respecting whose distance and direction from our position they had, strange to say, more than once inquired, and which stream one of them had frequently hunted upon and knew very well. There were many arguments both for and against this view : their evident fears—their sudden departure, and their having full horns of powder on the one side : on the other, the improbability of their quitting us in an unknown position, and the facts, still more significant, that they had taken with them neither extra mocassins nor a large store of tobacco, and an Indian never likes to undertake a journey unprovided in these respects.

Another conjecture was started, but we could not bear to entertain it long. It was, that the poor fellows had been followed by some among the Esquimaux, waylaid and assassinated ; but, independently of the distressing nature of this idea, it did not bear the stamp of probability, as the Esquimaux had never swerved from their friendly demonstrations to all, nor evinced the slightest dislike to the Indians especially ; indeed, I much doubt whether they were acquainted, except by vague rumour, with the enmity existing between the Indians and those of their own tribe frequenting the mouth of the Mackenzie, and probably did not even know that our wanderers

belonged to that locality. So we hoped this thought nearly away. I was despatched with two men, inland, to seek for traces of the missing, but found none; they did not return during the 13th, and we became very greatly alarmed. A longer trip was taken next morning to look for them, but unavailing as before, and we had begun to consider of the best course to be adopted towards their discovery, when late in the afternoon the wanderers were descried in the distance, and soon regained the camp, shoeless, foot-sore, faint, and famishing. As we had waited only for the return of the Indians to break up our camp and depart, the orders to do so were speedily given, and bidding farewell to the Esquimaux, we embarked and, turning our backs upon Cape Bathurst, set out on return to the Mackenzie.

When interrogated as to the reasons for their protracted absence, our Indians informed us that they had fired at and broken the leg of a deer, and in the heat of pursuit followed it right across to the shore of Franklin's Bay, where only they discovered that they had taken the wrong direction, and were, in fact, on the opposite side of the point to our position.

We told them how narrowly they had escaped abandonment; that it had been determined to

depart next morning if they did not return, and we asked them what they should have done in such a case.

“We should have dug a hole, lain down and died,” said they.

CHAPTER XXI.

Return Voyage.—Farewell to Esquimaux.—A Native Swell Mobsman.—Beaufort, Pullen, and Hooper Islands.—“LOGAN” Farewell.—Fort M’Pherson.—Horrible Massacre of Esquimaux.—Reflections upon its probable consequences.—Ascent of Mackenzie.—Corroborative Confession of Manuel Hebert.—Arrival at Fort Simpson.—Remarks on the late Expedition.—Arrangements for wintering.—Effect of cold upon Metal.—Luxurious Diet.—Ice “sets fast.”—A narrow Escape.—Dogged Prejudices.

WE encamped in the evening near the spot where our first meeting with this large band of Esquimaux had occurred, and were joined some time after arrival by a small party which, more attached to us than the rest, or possibly (uncharitable thought), in the hope of gaining further presents, had followed to see the last of us. They remained with us during the night, to the very great discomfiture of the Indians, whose fears were so much excited by their presence, that, notwithstanding the intense fatigue they had lately undergone, one of them, more nervous than his companion, refused to lie down to sleep, but kept watch beside our camp-fire. The farewells interchanged between ourselves and the few Esquimaux who had

followed to witness our final departure on the morning of the 15th, were interesting and indicative of the two races and their relative positions. Presents were appointed to each of the natives, and we explained to them, as well as we could, our gratification at the reception we had met with, and the good nature and amicable bearing they had displayed. A long oration, gesticulatory emphatic, was delivered in reply by one of the women : it was clearly valedictory, as well as eulogistic of the departing Kabloonan, whose general designation figured largely in the discourse, together with frequent allusions to particular individuals of both parties, and to the sun, skies, sea, whales, and other objects. They asked us when we should return, and we named ten moons as the period which must elapse ere a new visit could be made.

It would be waste of time to enter upon the details of our return-journey, which, like the outward trip, was a series of discomfort and toil. Gales, rain, snow, shallow water, heavy ice, a freezing temperature and wretched food—these tell our tale comprehensively.

A few small whales were seen (I never saw large ones nor met with their bones upon the coast) and near Point M'Kinley we found an Esquimaux family, of which the father was as expert in theft as one of our own dear swell-mob : he abstracted a knife, inch by

inch, from the belt of one of our men with celerity and skill which deserved the highest credit, and disposed of his booty up his sleeve with the most unconcerned air. I had watched his proceedings throughout in great amusement, and our friend was greatly disconcerted when his arm was grasped, and the retention of the blade in the act revealed me a witness to his culpability. At Toker Point, where we had landed on the 25th of July, and deposited some trinkets and a hieroglyphic despatch, the dwellings were now surrounded by natives, who had evidently discovered and comprehended our tokens, and were eager for us to halt and visit them.

They shouted to us, and waved clothes from the tops of their dwellings, but we had a fine fair breeze and could not delay. On this evening, two Esquimatux approached our encampment, near Refuge Cove, but displayed unaccountable signs of trepidation and alarm, and needed considerable coaxing and promises of presents to induce them to enter the camp; they remained near us all night, but it must have been in great doubt of our intentions, for they threw up a slight breastwork of driftwood, behind which they lay, and, on our preparing to depart next morning, scampered off to a distance and resumed their bows and arrows, which, it seems, they had concealed on

their first approach. On the 23rd we passed the easternmost channel of the Mackenzie, and gained one of the islands we had before discovered. It was called after the good Sir Francis Beaufort,* hydrographer of the navy, a name universally honoured throughout Europe. Next day we landed on another of our discoveries, a large island, whose summit was upwards of a hundred feet from the sea: this will henceforth be known as Hooper Island. To the northward we observed, but did not land upon, another island, which was called "Pullen," after our commander. On the 26th we proceeded to the westward, and passing Pelly Island, landed on Garry Island for the night. Next day we steered to the southward and sought for a channel, whereby to ascend the Mackenzie, failing in which we proceeded to the westward, and after more than one disappointment and difficulty, finally entered the river on the 31st, by the channel we had discovered last year, and halted near the spot which had before received us.

Here was the "Logan" doomed. Two seasons of employment and severe trial had left her in a sad plight; she had become sorely shattered and ice-torn: it was therefore resolved to abandon her here, as otherwise she would only uselessly delay our ascent of

* And since named Rae Island.

the stream: but in return for faithful service in arduous undertakings—in commemoration of many scenes of toil and privation through which she and our little band had passed—she was deposited with care and ceremony in her last resting-place.

On the left bank of the Mackenzie in latitude $68^{\circ} 44' 25''$ N., longitude $135^{\circ} 44' 42''$ W., was upreared the “Logan,” overlooking that element whose bosom she had so often pressed in storm and in tranquillity; resting upon ice, to whose rude shocks she was no stranger, and supported in her upright position by shores of drift-timber, such as had marked, for many a mile, the coast along which she had passed. I planted a few flowers in the mould which had been placed in the end which was embedded in the ground; may each succeeding spring behold them blossom anew.

Our ascent of the Mackenzie varied little from the same journey last year, and, strange to say, we again entered the Peel River unintentionally, although endeavouring to avoid it, but the numerous channels below Point Separation are provocative of error. On the 7th of September Fort M'Pherson was reached, and we were welcomed by Mr. Alexander M'Kenzie, the officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, in temporary charge of the post. Here I received, from the

lips of a witness (in part concerned in the affair), a detailed account of the occurrence which had been vaguely communicated to us by some Indians, during our descent of the Mackenzie in July last, and which was now proved to have been an atrocious and treacherous massacre of a party of unoffending Esquimaux by some of the Loucheux, aided—I blush to say—by one bearing a white skin, which was eternally dishonoured in his person. On the breaking up of the ice in the spring of 1850, a boat containing four white men—Manuel, steersman (French Canadian), M'Kay, Sanderson, and Brown (Orkney men), and two Indians, left Fort Good Hope, on the Mackenzie, to proceed to Fort M'Pherson, the station on the Peel River. They were detained by the stoppage of the ice, which frequently becomes checked in its descent after breaking up, and were in some distress for food, but fortunately shot some geese, which migrate hitherward in the spring. At Point Separation they landed for a short time, some of the party being desirous of inspecting the *cache* of provisions which had been placed there by Sir John Richardson. Point Separation is nearly the highest spot to which the Esquimaux ever now ascend, and it occurred that just at the time the party beached their boat among the masses of ice which lined the shore, they espied

an Esquimaux approaching in his canoe, threading his way through the lanes left by the ice ; others followed him until ten persons were counted. Manuel, either from fright or wantonness—most probably the former—desired to fire upon this party, but was more than once prevented by M'Kay, who turned aside the muzzle of his gun, and entreated him to forbear, until they should display a hostile intention. Manuel consented to reserve his fire for awhile, until M'Kay should run back for a short distance to see if a band of Loucheux approached, as they knew they could not be far off. At a short distance behind, M'Kay found the Indians who were paddling leisurely along, but who, on receipt of the intelligence, could not, as my informant said, come fast enough, but lightly hauling their bark canoes on shore, ran along the beach to the spot. The Loucheux were fourteen in number ; each man carried his gun, and three more fire-arms were in the possession of the Fort Good Hope party ; the Esquimaux had only their bows and arrows. Upon the commencement of a parley, and when invited to approach, the chief, or eldest of the Esquimaux, desired the Indians to put their guns aside, and his request being complied with, he paddled in to within a few yards of the beach and fired all his arrows into the ground in a circle, then held up

his bow and empty quiver to show that he had no more. His example was followed by the others in succession, and trade was then instituted between the parties ; buttons, knives, &c., being bartered by the Indians in exchange for trinkets of bone and ivory, furs, &c. When the stock of the Esquimaux was nearly exhausted, and business began to slacken, two of the Esquimaux departed to bring up the larger boat (i.e. oomiak) which contained the women, and more furs, &c. As these did not return quickly, two more of the party departed to hasten their arrival, leaving only six Esquimaux. The Loucheux being apparently apprehensive that the remainder of the band would also go away, invited them to go on shore, while waiting for their boat, and have a dance ; to this they acceded, but landed on the opposite side of a small creek, which divided the bank at this spot. The old chief was the first who stepped on shore, and as he did so, he pulled off his frock, and appearing only in breeches and mocassins, held up his arms and slapped his body to show that he carried no weapons : his companions did the same, and Loucheux and Esquimaux then began to dance on opposite sides of the creek. Good feeling appeared to be firmly established, but presently, M'Kay, who with Manuel was looking on, observed one of the Loucheux

skulking round the ice, trailing his gun after him, at full cock. He made him take his gun back, and "gave him a good scolding," but on going to the guns which were placed at a distance on the bank he found them *all at full cock*, and shortly saw more of the Indians stealing round under cover of the willows to endeavour to get behind the Esquimaux; he stopped these, but observed that, notwithstanding, half only of the Indians were dancing to engage the attention of the Esquimaux, while the rest were seeking to fall upon them in the rear. He called on Manuel to aid him in preventing the accomplishment of this treacherous design, but Manuel replied that if they wanted to kill them he should not stop them, but would rather push them on; that it was no business of theirs, &c. Failing to interest his own comrade in averting the catastrophe, M'Kay addressed himself to one of the chiefs of the Indians and threatened him with the anger of the Company's officer at the neighbouring post if this act were perpetrated: the Indian promised that they would not fire at them, and M'Kay hoped he had succeeded in stopping the murderous deed. The weather was at this time chilly, and as M'Kay had slipped into the water on landing, he ran off to a fire which the other two men of his party had made at a little distance, as he was now quite satisfied

that no evil was intended. He had not reached his companions when he heard a shot, succeeded immediately by others, and before he could return to the spot he had so lately left "the place was all one smoke," and four of the poor deceived Esquimaux lay stretched upon the sand; the other two ran to their canoes and escaped before the second volley was fired, though both were wounded by the first discharge. The Loucheux now fired arrows into those who remained; one of these had got into the water after being wounded, and now strove to shelter himself behind a piece of drift wood, diving under it as the arrows flew at him; this poor fellow they finished with their guns and he sank, but the others they gashed and mutilated, cutting the sinews under the arms and laying those limbs over their heads. When, shortly afterwards, the party of Whites and Indians reached Fort M'Pherson, and the account of this most dastardly massacre was related to the Indians who were about the establishment, they sided with M'Kay in condemning the perpetrators, who on their part now expressed regret that they had not taken M'Kay's advice, which, said they, they would have done but that they were "pushed on by Manuel," who was said to have confessed having fired with the Loucheux, but denied that his shot had done any execution.

Mr. Peers on ascending the Mackenzie in the Fall saw the bodies still lying on the shore, but they were shortly after buried or carried away by the Esquimaux.

Alas the day that so foul and bloody an act of treachery could be perpetrated! and alas, shame and degradation that a white man could be found worse fiend than the untutored savage!—to whose religion revenge is a duty, as it is sweet to his nature. We might perchance seek to palliate the commission of this deed in the Red Indian who has some real or fancied injury to retaliate, but even the shadow of an excuse, or of any other motive than innate wantonness and reckless bloodthirstiness, was wanting to the fiendish miscreant who shared their hellish plot.

The ill consequences of this very melancholy affair, will, it is to be feared, be extensive and irremediable, and it must be a source of deep regret to consider, how much good might have been accomplished had a different line of conduct been pursued.

The opportunity long and eagerly sought for to conciliate the Esquimaux, and to place them on a friendly footing with the Whites and the Loucheux, with which latter they had been so long at feud, was most recklessly thrown away. With a display of confidence never before met with in them, these Esquimaux had voluntarily yielded up their arms, and trustingly

placed themselves in close proximity to their hereditary enemies, regarding, I have little doubt, the presence of the Whites as an assurance against treachery. Probably very little persuasion would have prevailed on them to proceed to the Fort, where a few presents and judicious treatment would have gone very far to establish a friendly intercourse for the future. But, mark the disastrous reverse: henceforth the Whiteman will be included in the undying vengeance of the injured Esquimaux, who will seek—can we say unreasonably?—opportunities for clearing off the score of revenge. Woe be to detached parties, or solitary stragglers, who may fall in their way; a short shrift will be their lot, and we warned the scanty garrison of Peel River to have a care, lest, unarmed and unprepared, they should some day be surprised by a retaliating band.

We quitted Fort M'Pherson on the 9th, and in the afternoon reached the spot near Point Separation, where the massacre, just related, had occurred. The kiaks of the poor victims were still here, much hacked and broken; numerous foot-prints around were the only additional relics of the event. At Point Separation pemmican was buried in lieu of that we had removed in the summer, and a notice was deposited with it for any future expedition. On the 14th of the month,

we encountered the boat containing Mr. Peers, and the Peel River outfit for the season. With him (as steersman) was the man Manuel, who, at the desire of Captain Pullen, gave his version of the late shocking affair. His story differed very little from that of M'Kay's; he admitted having *fired three times* at the Esquimaux, and that he had replied to M'Kay's entreaty for his interference with the Loucheux, to let them do as they pleased, "*laisse les faire.*" Mr. Peers was apparently, and I think with very good reason, not without fears of an attack at some future time from the tribe so cruelly wronged; at his request the muskets and ammunition of our party were supplied to him,—it is to be hoped they will have no occasion to use them.

I may here take occasion to remark, that I believe the dastardly Manuel Hebert was sent down to Canada to take his trial for murder; this demonstration may, at any rate, do good in deterring others from such cold-blooded conduct in similar instances, even if, as I very much fear, the brute will escape punishment for want of witnesses.

Fort Good Hope was gained on the 17th, and we received a new and hearty greeting from our kind friend Mr. M'Beath and his amiable spouse. A supply of pemmican, flour, and clothing awaited

us; right welcome was the addition of the comestibles to our hitherto villanous diet. On the 25th, Fort Norman and my old friend Taylor, gave us shelter, and we were rejoiced by the sight of Fort Simpson, and the termination of this most disagreeable trip, on the 5th of October, by which time notable tokens of winter were displayed; and we had suffered much from the intelemency of the season, the thermometer having more than once fallen within a few degrees of zero,—which, I need not remark, is quite cold enough for boat travelling.

This last expedition must be considered well-nigh nugatory in every respect, with the almost unimportant exception of the addition of two or three islands to those already known about the Mackenzie. From the tokens in the early part of the summer previous to our arrival in the Arctic Sea, we had hoped for a fine and “open” season; these expectations were entirely void; worse weather and a more encumbered sea it would have been difficult to have encountered; and, as before remarked, no noteworthy consequences resulted from the undertaking. Neither Banks’ Land, the grand aim of the voyage, nor Wollaston Land, was reached; nor did we examine the course of that river which lies between the Mackenzie and the Coppermine—its efflux being in Liverpool Bay, and

of which nothing is known but by the reports of Indians, who call it "Soon illay tess," or the "known not river ;" by which title, indeed, L'Inconnû, it is distinguished in the country.

Captain Pullen, myself, and the two marines, were to remain at Fort Simpson during the winter ; the remainder of our party were dispatched to the fishery on Great Slave Lake, where many of the Company's servants would also be assembled.

Another long winter had now to be passed, a formidable prospect to those who have few means of occupation, and less comforts at their disposal. But we had here, at any rate, more companions and a nearer approach to civilised life than had been the lot of some of us last season, and had no intention of permitting black ennui to engross eight or ten long months of our lives. There was a small library at the Fort, which the gentlemen of the district had created to while away weariness at their respective posts ; of this we were kindly permitted to avail ourselves, and found it a great solace. Meteorological and astronomical observations occupied much of our time. The dipping-needle, which had been my faithful companion throughout our wanderings, was placed in a bastion of the Fort, and also received its share of attention each day.

One must be cautious in handling instruments or other articles of metal in extreme cold, as the bare skin is apt to stick to them on contact, and the sensations then experienced are identical with those of burning: very frequently when incautiously drinking from a tin-cup which we carried on our journeys, one's lips were for an instant glued to its edge; and in a very low temperature ice when put into our mouths would cleave for a second to the tongue. The most curious instance I ever experienced of the effects of cold was one whose relation has been received with less credibility than any other I have made: this was the existence of ice in the nostrils, and, strange to say, it was neither painful nor troublesome. I had heard the fact mentioned at an early period of our arrival, and must confess that I was myself suspicious of an attempt to impose upon my credulity, but experience proved its truth in my own person.

Our fare at Fort Simpson—Englishmen always think feeding an important item of existence—was no doubt luxurious, compared to that which myself and companions at Bear Lake had subsisted on the preceding winter, yet it favoured neither gout nor bilious tendency. Generally, as is customary in the country during the winter, two meals a day were provided: the first occurred at about 10, and

consisted of fish (either roasted, or boiled and mixed with potatoes, forming a kind of "twice laid,") tea, and homœopathic allowances of bread. This was called breakfast. Supper took place between 4 to 6 according to the season, and was the grand affair of the day: dried or fresh rein-deer or moose-meat, rabbits sometimes, and now and then beaver, bear, or goat's flesh; tea, bread, and an unfrequent pudding, or pancake, these comprised nearly all the varieties of the repast. A small quantity of wine and spirits had been forwarded from the Red River colony for our use; it was, of course, reserved for high days and holidays, when each heart recalled its absent ones—loved and loving.

The Mackenzie "set fast" on the 1st of December; had the ice continued much longer in motion, I might possibly have had a tragic tale to relate here. Four Indians had arrived on the opposite bank on the 18th, and an endeavour was made to get a boat through the ice to fetch them, but the attempt was necessarily relinquished, and they were told as well as the distance would allow, to make for the "rapid fishery," about five days' journey from the Fort, where a supply of fish was stored. Two days before the ice stopped, two Whitemen and two Indians arrived from Fort Confidence, where Dr. John Rac was wintering previous

to proceeding on another Arctic expedition (which has since resulted in his reaching Wollaston Land, and other valuable consequences, for which partly the Gold Council Medal of the Royal Geographical Society was awarded him). These men had been twenty-six days upon the journey, and had exhausted their provisions; they were obliged to kill one of their dogs next day, but the Indians, although starving, would not touch its flesh, their superstition holding that the dog is their brother. Only two of the Indians who first had arrived had departed for the fishery on the rapid; the others had remained opposite to the Fort, and were now in a very low state, being unable from weakness to cross the river immediately upon its setting fast.

CHAPTER XXII.

New Year's Day Festival.—Cyclical fluctuation in the breed of Rabbits.—Conjectured causes, and Indian superstition thereon.—Consequent effect upon fur-bearing animals.—New mode of catching Foxes.—Severity of Season.—Mercury metamorphosed.—Aurora Borealis.—Disruption of the Ice.—A strange prophecy.—Melancholy effects of superstition.—An Indian Marriage.—The Fight of the Females.—Farewell to Fort Simpson.—Fort Resolution.—Manufacture of Pemican.—Slave River.—*Muddled* Moments.—The Hudson's Bay Company of Merchant Adventurers.—The Hardy Voyageur.—The Adventures of a Pack.—Arrival at the Noyé.—A beautiful Cascade.—Making a Portage.—Burn the Boats.—Fort Chipewyan.—The Chipewyans and Crees, their Language and Idiosyncrasy.—An Indian's Remorse.—Mr. Geero's Predilections.—The Lake of the Hills.—Natural Pitch.—Clear Water River.—Methy Portage.—Mermaid's Hair.

NEW Year's day is the principal festival at the posts of the Hudson's Bay Company; that which ushered in 1850 was ceremoniously observed at Fort Simpson. The men assembled at an early hour in front of the main dwelling-house, and fired a feu-de-joie in compliment to their officers and the occasion. All then entered the hall, which is very large for the reception of Indians, and were welcomed by their Bourgeois (Mr. Bell), the title always given to the head of the district, and the other gentlemen of the establishment,

who shook hands with each in turn, addressing to him at the same time a few complimentary phrases. The guests then seated themselves upon benches ranged round the walls of the apartment, and one of their number assuming the office of Ganymede (ye Gods, what a satire on the cup-bearer of Jove!), administered to each a portion of the soul-rejoicing fluids provided by the Bourgeois, who is yearly allowed a small quantity of wine, spirits, and shrub. Healths and good wishes were interchanged; pipes, with their attendant weed produced,—and smoke and talk now flowed apace. In about an hour the visitors, having more than once repeated their libations to Bacchus, rose to withdraw, addressing thankful acknowledgments to the provider of the treat, and accepting joyfully an invitation to devote the coming evening to the worship of Terpsichore, and partake of a feast to be presently prepared. In the afternoon the company re-assembled in the hall, where a—to them—sumptuous repast was spread, of which, to enumerate some of its delicacies, a roasted swan, deer's tongues, potatoes, turnips, and a huge plum-pudding, were items. Dinner having succeeded drink, was followed by dancing, which was kept up unflinching until after midnight, refreshments being again provided in the shape of supper. Thus ended

New Year's day in the far north of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories.

It is a very remarkable and well established circumstance that the rabbits in the north of America are subject to periodical conditions of increase and reduction in their numbers. They experience cycles of progress and decay, comprising about eight or nine years, and so certain is this law of revolution that Whites and Indians alike make their calculations with a view to its occurrence. Overrunning the land in astonishing quantities one year, these animals gradually lessen their numbers annually, until very few can be caught; having arrived at their minimum, they then gradually increase, until again reaching their maximum advance.

This remarkable ebb and flow of life is ascribed to more than one cause. It is said that the rabbits migrate at regular intervals to avoid the merciless persecutions of their many enemies, lynx, wolf, fox, marten, ermine, and even ravens; but another and more probable cause assigned is their visitation by an epidemic which is fatal to myriads. The Indians have, I was told, an idea that when rabbits are not to be found near, "they" have gone up into the clouds, and that they frequently hear them crying there.

Whatever may be the cause of this variation it very importantly affects the fur trade in this region. The year succeeding that when rabbits are most plentiful is generally the most prolific in the supply of those animals before-mentioned whose principal food they are; and in the same manner the season following that of their almost entire absence is wofully deficient in its tribute of fur-bearing creatures. Possibly the epidemic which visits the victims may also affect the ravenous tyrants, whose prey they become; but independently of this conjecture there is no doubt that in the times of scarcity the lesser beasts of prey are reduced to great hunger, and feed upon each other. I have several times seen martens which had been trapped devoured by lynxes. At Fort Simpson, on one occasion an Indian who was about to set a hook and line in the river for fish observed a fox near him, which had been impelled by starvation to approach the habitation of man in search of food. He threw the baited hook towards the animal, it greedily swallowed the deceitful prize whose acquisition was its capture and its death.

We experienced severe cold at Fort Simpson, registering more than once 50 below zero; but this was mild compared to the temperature at Bear Lake, where my last winter was passed. Dr. Rae wrote

to say that the thermometer had been below -70 at Fort Confidence.

It is very curious to witness the congelation of mercury, which takes place about -40 : when brought into the atmosphere from a considerably higher temperature the process is necessarily very gradual; the quicksilver slowly contracts itself, a dull film overspreads the mass, and, immediately previous to complete congelation, a thin bright fluid appears on the surface; the substance is then of a doughlike consistence, and may be indented with a pointed instrument; but speedily the final change occurs; King Frost asserts his sway, and the usually restless metal, which whilom played fast and loose with finger and dish in its frolicsome gambols, is reduced to an inert, indurated solid, presenting the appearance of frosted silver.

Few nights passed without a greater or less display of the Aurora Borealis, that wondrous phenomenon whose existence after more than half a century of research, is yet unaccounted for satisfactorily. Language is vain in the attempt to describe its ever-varying and gorgeous phases; no pen nor pencil can pourtray its fickle hues, its radiance, and its grandeur. I insert the following notice of a display which occurred on the 22nd of February, 1851, more as an

instance of the wonderful variety of the phenomenon than in the hope of conveying anything like an adequate idea of its beauty,—*that* I feel to be impossible.

“At 10.50 P.M., Aurora appeared in a broad transverse band of dull diffused light, extending from E. by S. to W.N.W., passing through the tail of the Great Bear: two narrow bands of faint light from the same points passed through the zenith, as perfectly and regularly defined as if two ribands were stretched athwart the sky: the space between them, of equal breadth with themselves, appeared very dark, either materially so or by contrast.

“To the northward a faint diffused light appeared over dark haze or clouds on the horizon; through this haze stars were not perceptible.

“At 11, Aurora was further displayed in an immense mass or bush, which, occupying the space between E.N.E. and E.S.E., and covering the entire constellation of Ursa Major, gradually narrowed after passing the zenith, and thence continued in a serpentine band of moderate breadth to the west, passing in its route a little to the northward of the Pleiades. The eastern extremity was of ‘scroll’ or ‘curtain’ character, with considerable motion (easterly), and in it prismatic colours were finely developed, red and

violet hues predominating ; the entire display was of a bright greenish golden colour or light. To the northward a few light and faint vertical patches were visible.

“ At midnight a serpentine arch or band—composed of series of vertical lines in continual motion throughout its length—extended from E.S.E., considerably to the southward of the zenith, to W., its vertex sinking slowly towards the S.W. horizon ; in this also colours were finely though transitorily displayed, the main body being of the same hue as before.

“ Five minutes after midnight this arch suddenly dispersed itself over all the sky to the northward, and partly also to the southward, of the zenith in beams, rays, streamers, and every imaginable disposition of lines, the most remarkable being innumerable vertical patches, with which the sky was as it were powdered, all bright and all in motion ; a narrow, but brilliant serpentine band—a perfect fringe of blazing light—rose at east, and ran at a small distance above the horizon, through north to west.

“ The weather was clear and calm, but I am disposed to conjecture that the instantaneous dispersion of one portion, which occurred with lightning-like celerity, and the unceasing motion of the whole display, were caused by conflicting currents of air in the higher regions of the atmosphere.”

The monotony which characterises a winter in the north was but seldom broken in upon during our condition of vegetation at Fort Simpson, and we gladly hailed the first signs of spring, and the prospect of speedy deliverance from our "durance vile." A wild duck, harbinger of a more genial season, was killed on the first of May, a goose was shot next day, and the migrating birds now began to flock in. On the 4th the long ice-bound river burst its bonds, and, rising considerably, carried off huge trees, and masses of drift-wood from the banks, to add to the vast profusion which we had observed on the shores of the ocean, to the westward of the Mackenzie's mouth.

Our party had received an increase during the winter by the arrival of Mr. W. Lane, who was to take charge of Fort de Liard in the spring. Upon the breaking up of the ice this gentleman prepared to depart for his post, and I had the good fortune to share his journey, as I could return with the party which would bring down the furs collected during the past season.

Mr. Lane had been many years a resident in the Hudson Bay Company's territories, and enlivened our trip with many a pleasant joke and anecdote. One of these was truly remarkable, and would

scarcely be held as credible had we not the testimony of an actual witness.

During the time that Mr. Lane was stationed in New Caledonia he received a visit from an aged Indian, of the Carrier tribe, who had been with Sir Alexander Mackenzie in one of his trips of discovery to the sea coast, and had the reputation of being a great medicine-man. As he had not paid a visit to the fort for several years his appearance excited some surprise, and he was asked why he came. He replied that he had come to look at the fort and its inmates for the last time. "Did you ever," said the old man, "hear thunder in the winter time?" Mr. Lane replied in the negative. "Then," rejoined the Indian, "when in two moons' time you hear a clap of thunder, send to my lodge and you will find me dead."

Within fifteen days of the appointed time Mr. Lane did indeed hear a solitary burst of thunder; the nephew of the old Indian, who was the fort interpreter, started off directly to his uncle's lodge, and on arrival found that he had just expired. The realisation of this prophecy did not in the least surprise the rest of the Indians, who had expressed their entire conviction of its fulfilment.

The superstition of the Indians is a wonderful

feature of their character, and they frequently pay severely for their credulous simplicity. Not many years ago a report was prevalent amongst those of the Slave Lake quarter, that their dead had been restored to life, and had established a fort in the interior, where food and supplies of all kinds were to be obtained in profusion. So strong was the belief, that great numbers made pilgrimages to the spot designated, and many died of famine and privation in consequence.

We had not actual experience of the tribes in what is called the Southern Department, of which the head-quarters are established at Moose Factory in James's Bay, but I was favoured with one or two interesting anecdotes of that locality by a gentleman who had lately left the district of the south. Here, for instance, is an Indian wedding, as it now exists. The maidens do not marry until they have reached that age which with them as with us is called sweet sixteen. The ceremony performed at Moose was thus described :—the couple go into the store where goods are dispensed in barter, and each receives a piece of gingerbread, the man a dram of spirits, the woman a printed gown-piece, or some other trifle. The bridegroom then declares in presence of witnesses that he will on no account separate from his wife,

upon whose finger a ring is put by the interpreter; the ceremony is then complete, and is held as indissoluble. Separation seldom occurs unless the wife becomes recklessly abandoned, which is a rare circumstance; the men are very jealous, and are liable to retaliate revengefully upon their offending brothers. Weddings generally take place in the fall of the year about the time of goose-hunting, and the happy couple immediately repair to the marshes to spend the honeymoon. The husband generally receives a present of ammunition and hastens to procure a stock of geese with which he feasts his friends.

Two young Indian women were observed some years ago in violent conflict; they were parted, but intreated to be permitted to decide the contest as they would then be friends again; this request, appearing reasonable, was acceded to, the bystanders taking care that there should be fair play. After a lengthened and determined struggle the weakest succumbed to the superior prowess of her fortunate adversary. It appeared that these girls were in love with the same man, and had self-instituted this mode of deciding their claims. No wonder they fought like wild cats. The defeated damsel was so much enraged at her disappointment that she soon afterwards shot her rival dead.

On my return to Fort Simpson preparations were already instituted for our departure, as Captain Pullen intended to proceed some time in advance of the yearly brigade. Bidding farewell to the companions of a long and dreary winter, we quitted Fort Simpson on the 5th of June, and ascended the Mackenzie by easy stages.

We reached Big Island on the 13th, remained there three days, and gained Fort Resolution on the 20th.

This was the neatest and cleanest establishment we had yet seen; much care was evident in every department. The houses were built of well split and squared logs placed edge to edge, and closely fitting, and the buildings were enclosed by pickets of regular height and make.

Pemmican had so often been our food during the long sojourn in this land of eternal snow and hard meat, that I was desirous of carrying with me a specimen of the native material, for the inspection of the curious in such matters: I was furnished with a small quantity made after the most approved fashion, and brought it home all safe, but as I fear I cannot hand it to each of my readers for examination, I will briefly describe the process of preparing the article, for the benefit of those who are not already acquainted with it. Upon the slaughter of a reindeer or buffalo,

the hunter has to consider three modes of disposing of the carcase. When near a station he generally puts the animal "en c  che," surrounding it with logs and heaping snow over all to keep the wild beasts from it, a precaution not always successful; the wolverine, or glutton, being a most determined marauder. Intelligence is then sent to the Fort, whence sledges are despatched to bring home the prize. In this case the meat is fresh, and will of course remain so, while frozen, for any length of time. The other two modes of preparing the flesh are similar to each other, differing only according to the caprice of the curer or the distance which intervenes between the spot where the animal falls and the destination of the carcase; in either case the flesh is cut into layers and the bones removed, the meat is then placed upon stages and subjected to the action and smoke of slow fires and the sun's rays; by this process it gradually becomes desiccated, the watery particles evaporate, leaving only the fibre and sinew. It is according to the completeness of this process that "dried" or "half-dried meat" are obtained. I need not say much about their excellence; neither of them is very nice, and we can only give them the degrees of comparison, bad and worse, but their preparation is rendered necessary by the great

distances which occur between the hunting-grounds and the forts, and also by the fact that much of the meat is killed in the summer, and could not therefore otherwise be kept sound. Dry meat is the principal component of pemmican. It is pounded fine, almost to powder, often indeed being passed through a sieve to intercept the large fragments, and then placed in a trough where melted fat is poured upon and well mixed with it. The composition is placed in a parchment bag, rammed down, and pressed; when cool it is like a mass of lead. Fifty-five pounds of the powdered meat mixed with thirty-five of fat make a "picce" of pemmican, which the Canadians facetiously designate "un taureau," in allusion to the buffalo, from which a great part is made.

We remained eight days at Fort Resolution, and were much indebted to Mr. W. M'Murray for his considerate attention to our comfort, which was, notwithstanding, sadly marred by the unfailling attacks of myriads of mosquitoes. Murderous crusades, and innumerable inventions for wholesale slaughter by fire, smoke, water, gunpowder, &c., were of little avail against these pests; it seemed, as was remarked by one of the seamen, that a thousand insects flocked to the funeral of each one killed, and it was the best way after all to resign oneself to the plague.

Mr. M'Murray and I sought relief from our miseries in milk and cranberries, and really I am afraid we had more relish than judgment in the discussion of this refreshing medley.

On the last day of June we bade farewell to Mr. M'Murray and the other denizens of Fort Resolution, and resumed our journey homewards. The ascent of Slave River, which we entered a couple of hours after departure, had little of novelty to interest wanderers whose thoughts were directed with eager hope towards home and its relations. On the 7th, Salt River, a small tributary of the Slave River, was reached. It would be unnoticeable but for the existence of a half-caste family, who have formed a tiny colony on its banks, and are content to live on from year to year in this isolated locality. Their possessions consisted of several buildings, some cows, horses and dogs, and two or three small plots of cultivated ground, in which were potatoes, turnips and onions. The good folks supplied us with tops of the latter vegetables, but declined to pull up the roots, which, they said, always remained in the ground. My reminiscences of the spot include those of a trifling accident, which there occurred to me. Being about to bathe, as was our daily custom, I jumped headlong into the stream, and experienced the reward

of my incaution, by finding myself over head and hands in soft mud, the water being unexpectedly shallow : I was fortunate in escaping suffocation.

There can scarcely be found a more wonderful instance of the combination of ingenuity, perseverance and endurance, in the search after commercial prosperity, than is afforded by the Hudson's Bay Fur Trading Company, instituted so early as the reign of Charles II. In the earlier stages of its existence, only a few positions were established on the shores of Hudson's Bay, but the range of operations was gradually widely extended, and in North America alone they now hunt over an immense territory, and give occupation to numerous persons, — Whites, Indians, and half-castes. From the shores of Hudson's Bay in the Atlantic, to Vancouver's Island and the Columbia River District on the Pacific, and from the borders of Canada to the dreary Arctic circle, isolated stations of the Company are established, often amid dense forests, and cheerless solitudes. In many of these, not more than from two to six men pass long winters of monotonous occupation ; to cut wood and bring home provisions on sledges are their principal avocations, and their diet is in many instances fish, uninterruptedly, or varied by dried meat, whose *excellence* I have already remarked upon. The

transport of goods and peltries to and from the numerous stations must impress one with a feeling of admiration at the indomitable energy and laborious perseverance which overcomes every difficulty and braves so many dangers to attain its ends. Mountain and forest, torrent and shallow, extremes of cold, heat and privation, are encountered and set at defiance by the enterprising "voyageur ;" where force avails not, patience and stratagem are successfully resorted to, disaster only seems to create a new spur, and point out some new method for the next enterprise. Furs which are brought from some of the most distant parts in the Northern Department—of which York Factory in Hudson's Bay is the head-quarters—traverse between 3,000 and 4,000 miles ere they reach that post, whence they are shipped for England, and occupy nearly a year in their transit, in which they undergo extraordinary mutations of travel. The furs are made up into parcels or "packs," weighing eighty-four to ninety pounds, and pressed by wedges or screws into the smallest possible compass ; the body of the pack is generally composed of the smaller and finer skins, such as muskrat, martens, and otters, of which from 300. to 600 are required ; these are enclosed by skins of the bear, wolf, and reindeer. The packs are all made of a certain size and shape, and securely

bound with stout thongs of hide, called pack-cord, which in the not unfrequent periods of distress for food is generally the first substitute for more legitimate aliment, as by long boiling it acquires a jelly-like consistence.

During the winter they are transported on sledges—a service of a severe nature—to the nearest post from which water carriage can be made available; and on the breaking up of the ice in the spring are placed in large boats, of precisely the same make as that (the “Try Again”) which we had on our second trip to the Arctic sea, and which will carry as many as 110 “pieces” or “packs,” nearly ten thousand pounds weight, but their general load, where the travel is bad, is, I believe, from seventy to eighty pieces. These boats are manned with nine, seven, or even five men, and it will presently be seen that the poor fellows work like horses; indeed I unhesitatingly assert that I never saw toil to equal, for endurance and severity, that of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s servants during the summer season. From two in the morning until eight or nine, and often later, at night they are engaged in the most fatiguing labour, only halting for a short time to breakfast, and supping when they land at night, taking a snack of pemmican as they can catch it during the progress of the boat.

Among the principal of the difficulties which impede inland navigation and transport in North-West America, the numerous rapids must be considered chief: where these are trifling they are mounted or descended with fully laden boats and slight inconvenience or delay; but in passing bad rapids great care, preparation, and skill, become necessary, and most generally "portages" have to be made at a great expense of time and labour. The boats are brought to the foot of the rapid, and there unloaded, every article being transported on the men's backs through the woods to a point of the stream above the embarrassed locality; the boats are then dragged "light" up the rapid, or where it is very bad, are themselves carried across the portage, after which they are again speedily laden, and the party hastens onwards. In the voyage between Fort Simpson and York Factory, nearly ninety places of greater or less difficulty occur; some are of little notice, others dangerous in the extreme, and these, I need scarcely observe, require very great skill and practice in their passage. We of the boat expedition, who might not unreasonably advance a claim to some credit for knowledge of boats and their management, were quite incompetent to act in these positions: there is nearly as much difference

between a "voyageur" and a sailor, as between the latter and a landsman, and none but an unreasonable man would fail to recognise the distinction.

The Noyé Rapid—so named from having caused a death by drowning—at which we arrived on the 9th, was formed by a ridge of granite, irregular and disconnected, lying right across the river, and of course greatly obstructing the regular course of the stream. It was necessary to make a portage of the goods here; our boat was unladen accordingly, and the contents carried across a forest point which borders the river; this portage I conjectured to be about a quarter of a mile in length. Next morning, the 10th, the first brigade of the Mackenzie River district, in charge of Mr. O'Brien, reached our encampment, and the boats were successively taken up the rapid by a steersman of great experience and skill. In the ascent they were partly rowed, partly tracked up with a stout rope, manned by two crews united; the steersman stood in the stern handling the huge sweep, more than twenty feet long, which serves in place of a rudder, and one or two men were stationed in the forepart of the boat to keep her from striking the rocks; about two and a half hours were expended in the passage of this rapid, including unloading and loading. We

breakfasted at the head of the rapid, and while so engaged were joined by Messrs. Bell and Ross, who had brought up the second brigade.

The flotilla was divided into two brigades or bands for convenience, as the whole number would delay each other's progress up the rapids, and embarrass the portages in the conveyance of goods; for this reason it is customary for one division to leave headquarters some days in advance of the other, but the emulation of the men is such that the hindmost party make the most strenuous exertions to reach the vanguard, and in this they frequently succeed, as they are generally the stronger and more active. At a short distance from the Noyé we encountered the Pelican Rapid; here the craft were entirely cleared and dragged over a ridge of rocks; the rest of the rapid was accomplished with great labour and some risk, the bows of the boats being frequently high upraised and the water rushing in at the stern; at one part of this rapid a "batteau" was lost last year. Next came the Mountain, and this being a regular fall of about ten feet the boats could not of course ascend it, but were dragged over a steep and rugged ledge of rocks at an angle of 45° with the horizon. Hence we proceeded to the Brûlé, and having carried the goods across the portage encamped

for the night, as here it was necessary to transport the boats also by land, a distance of about four hundred yards. This was accomplished next morning, and our journey was continued to the Embarras, so called from the great quantities of drift wood which obstruct the stream and render a portage of everything necessary. The island rapid was narrow and swift, but we were enabled to ascend it with half-laden craft. The "Cassette," our next difficulty, and the last rapid in Slave River, was of picturesque beauty: it was composed of several falls in succession, one of which, viewed from below, was quite a gem among Nature's bountiful productions: the water fell in dense broken volumes between two portals of abrupt black rock, steep and massive; sparkling silvery spray, diamond-like in the brilliance of its hues, beccapped the mass, dancing and glistening in the bright sunlight as if in gladness at its freedom; a back ground of hilly foliage, varied in light and colour, perfected this exquisite combination of still and animated scenery.

This rapid being impassable we had to renew the labour of a portage, "carrying" over bare rock for about 400 yards' distance, over which also the boats were dragged. A new operation had now to be performed; the numerous portages over rock

and rough ground had greatly jagged the sides and keels of our vessels, which therefore required “ burning.

The ragged splinters are cut away, and the wood smoothed off as well as may be with the crooked knife—an implement in universal use in the country, having, as its name implies, a bent blade and handle, and greatly resembling those used by blacksmiths in shoeing horses. Large pieces of birch bark, burning with a fierce and lurid flame, are ignited under the boat, and grease is rubbed over the bottom to decrease resistance in passing through the water; soft resin is also applied to cracks or holes in the planks.

In the evening of the twelfth a partial eclipse of the moon occurred, and we also observed a most splendid meteor, which bore a train like a bursting rocket, and so much resembled a comet, remaining stationary for a considerable time, that we sought for it next evening, but had no recurrence of the phenomenon, and concluded that it must have been a meteor or fire-ball. The weather at this period was in strong contrast to that of our winter's sojourn; during the hottest days we registered 83° of Fahrenheit in shade, 104° in the sun, and by concentrating the rays of that body upon a black

substance obtained as high as 112° . On the 14th we entered the Rivière de Rocher, thence passed into the Athabasca Lake, and in the evening landed at Fort Chipewyan, which was once the head-quarters, on this side Methy Portage, of the North-West Company, once the rival of the Hudsons' Bay Company, with which however a coalition was formed, I believe about the year 1827. We were politely received by Mr. Todd, and at supper were introduced to the Père Pharoux, a French missionary of the Roman Catholic religion, with whom I enjoyed the privilege of much interesting conversation. Mons. Pharoux had apparently devoted considerable time to the study of the Indians in this locality, who consist chiefly of Chipewyans, or "Mountains," and Crees. The men were mostly tall, well made, and moderately stout; the females were generally tall, slight, and well-featured. With reference to the language of the Chipewyans, Mons. Pharoux observed that their grammatical rules are distinctly defined, though eccentric, and of almost infinite variety, certain terminations or prefixes being applied to words in classes, or according to the sense in which they were to be used; as, for instance, things animate or inanimate, natural or artificial, were distinguished by certain terms expressing the quality: and here again

another division, if it may so be called, of class, occurred, for in speaking of a house abstractedly one term would be used, but when speaking of it in connection with anything in or about it a new expression became necessary.

Mons. Pharoux drew a broad line of demarcation between the characters of the two races. "The Crees," said he, "are quick in comprehension, seizing an idea with readiness, but, like a mirror, they retain the impression so long only as the matter is before them, and the consequence is it has in a short time to be entirely re-explained. The Chipewyans, on the contrary, are very slow (not dull) of comprehension, and preserve a greater impassibility of expression; so that often, after explaining a point of difficulty, one would dismiss them with the idea that they could not understand it, but would find, on questioning them afterwards, even at six months' distance of time, that they had either understood the subject at once or had pondered over it until perfect comprehension was arrived at, and that the impression of the matter was, moreover, a lasting one."

I was told here of an Indian of the Beaver tribe, who, after having experienced with many others the horrors of starvation in 1849, visited in the spring of the following year the fort at Dunvegen. The

gentleman in charge of the Post offered him his hand in greeting, but it was declined, as were also the salutations of other Indians present. When asked the reason of his strange demeanour, he replied, "I am not worthy to shake hands with men; I am no longer a man, for I have eaten man's flesh. It is true I was starving, was dying of hunger; but I cannot forgive myself; the thought of the act is killing me, and I shall die soon, and with contentment, for although I still exist I cannot any longer consider myself a human being." He had, as I understood, since died.

This is very different from the conduct of the Slaves and Dogribs, who seem to have little regret for the commission of such acts, although the rest of the tribes regard them with abhorrence (or fear?) and will seldom intermarry with them.

This reminds me of an old Indian at Fort Simpson named Geero, who had, it was said, assisted in the consumption of eighteen individuals during periods of starvation, and was reported to prefer human flesh to any other. While we were wintering at that fort I was very desirous of going off for a few days into the woods to try and find reindeer or moose under the guidance of an Indian, but it so happened that only Geero was at the fort when my wish was

expressed, and that gentleman refused to be my convoy: after much solicitation and pressing for his reason, he told the interpreter that the truth of the matter was he did not dare to trust himself with any one alone in the woods, as he might be tempted to treat himself to a repast of his much-esteemed fare. On the 16th we quitted Fort Chipewyan, and speedily got out of the "Lake of the Hills," as that of Athabasca is frequently called, entering the "Embarras"—a narrow sluggish stream, apparently an arm of the Athabasca River, into which we emerged next day. We encountered on the 18th some springs of natural pitch, which oozes out of the ground in a half liquid condition, and hardens at the surface; it is used extensively for the boats which are made in the country.

We now began to find berries tolerably ripe, and revelled in their refreshing delights; there were many kinds, but the most plentiful and the most pleasant were raspberries, gooseberries and currants, of which latter two kinds of black preponderated.

The 21st found us at the junction of the Great and Little Athabasca Rivers; the latter is generally called the "Clear Water," and its title is well deserved; we turned off into it, and continued to ascend until the Cascade was reached—a small shallow

rapid where it was necessary to unload the boats, and make a portage of nearly half a mile in length. After this came the Bonne, of which the portage is quite a mile long, but here were encamped numerous Indians with horses, and the men were spared the labour of "carrying." Next morning the Bigstone and Pine Rapids were successively passed with slight delay, and we reached the Terre Blanche in the afternoon; this was a succession of short steep falls, and both goods and boats had to be transported across the Portage.

On the 26th we arrived at Methy Portage, and had now no longer to ascend, but would henceforth continually go down current, unless in lakes, to the sea. This portage is across a height of land, and as it is nine or ten miles long, the goods only are transported on horseback, boats being stationed at either end, and exchanging their cargoes.

We commenced our descent towards York Factory on the 30th, poled out of the tiny meandering Loche, entered the Methy Lake, and thence passed into the river of the same name—a very narrow and shallow stream. Buffalo Lake was traversed on the 31st, and the 1st of August carried us into Deep River, and Isle à la Crosse Lake; the fort of this name was reached in the afternoon. Athabasca Lake has a

remarkable characteristic; the water is perfectly crowded with green particles like short pieces of hair: they are apparently separated from vegetation at the bottom by the agitation of the water, as I understood that in winter, when frozen over, the lake is quite clear. The conceit struck me that this was the hair-cutting saloon of the mermaids and mermen, and these capillary particles the refuse of their verdant locks.

It would needlessly occupy the time of my readers did I detail every circumstance of our rapid downward route; I shall therefore content myself with mentioning only the more remarkable points of this very interesting journey. Running a rapid is one of the most exhilarating incidents one can experience; the excitement and risk lend enchantment to the occasion, and one's spirits rise to the boiling point. We were under the guidance of the first rapid pilot in the country, who had had charge, for more than twenty years, of the boats which each season carry supplies to Methy Portage for the Mackenzie River District, and convey the furs of that brigade to York Factory, but even L'Esperance, whose skill and experience were undoubtedly very great, could not avoid "breaking" a boat sometimes.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Running a Rapid.—A Rapid Catalogue.—Portage du Diable.—A fatal disaster.—Tales by the way.—Rivière Maligne.—The “Pas.”—Norway House.—Les Portes d’Enfer.—Return home.

WE have just arrived at the head of a bad rapid, and are preparing to “run” it: will you take a seat with us in the boat, reader, and share the striking episode? Come then.

See, our old steersman, who has held the sweep during ordinary progress, now relinquishes it to L’Esperance, who will here trust only to his own well-tried experience and sagacity; the steersman and bowmen plant themselves in the bows with long poles to push off from rocks or stones, and assist the guide in altering the direction of the vessel’s progress. Hitherto we have been quietly gliding down a moderate current, but now—“êtes-vous prêt?—tenez!” we enter the race, and in an instant are whirled into the midst of the boiling rapid, and rush headlong onwards with lightning speed, the water bubbling and foaming and roaring around us, spray dashing

into our faces, and the crew straining at their oars as if for bare life—now all together, now on one side only, and now all suddenly backing water at a shout from the guide, who sees that huge stone right in our course. Round with the sweep! push off with those poles! backwater, good oarsmen, or we must strike, and shall infallibly smash to pieces! Ha! a long breath of suspense—hurra! there we go safely past the rock; but heavens! there is another we cannot escape; pull men, pull! keep her bow off, boys, push, hard! Ha! there's a shock, we've struck the stone, and for an instant hang upon it; the seething waters rushing past, and in their frantic endeavours to bear us onward straining every plank and timber, which crack loudly. “Ah bon Dieu! Ah Seigneur! Brisé en morceaux!” such are the impassioned exclamations which display the alarm and anxiety of our guide, who redoubles his efforts notwithstanding, and, actively seconded by the crew—who vie with him in exertions and noise—he succeeds in releasing the craft, and, whirling round for an instant in a bubbling eddy, we rush on again like a steam-engine. Do you see that black abrupt point of rocks, against which the torrent hurls itself in impotent fury, dashing high in snowy masses and sparkling foam, and those surging rollers passing over rocky obstruc-

tions, beyond which the angry stream hangs for a moment in gurgling gyrations—then speeds on again in wild career? At that spot there is a dangerous turn of the stream, and a right difficult task shall we have to guide our frail bark in safety beyond that frowning extremity, and through those lurking obstacles. Steady, lads, steady : mind your oars and watch me well,—pull easy for a moment,—now pull ! pull ! *bon !* easy now, easy ; now pull hard the larboard, backwater the starboard oars !—Oh Ciel !! nous sommes crevé sur le roche ! push off, with the poles—pull ! larboard oars push, push ! backwater, starboard, back—push, push ! there, she turns ! push, pull !—we rush frantically onwards at furious speed—a moment of intense excitement and uncertainty, then, Ah, grand Dieu, merci ! relaxed speed and smoother water tell that the difficulty is passed. Our own trial is ended ; let us turn to watch the fortunes of our companion boats. See, the foremost nears the crooked channel, the crew pulling lightly and quietly in preparation for the approaching struggle : now the steersman shouts lustily to his crew, and vigorously plies the long sweep to swing his boat ; the rowers labour at their oars like tigers ; the bowmen shift their poles from spot to spot, as each emergency needs, and our comrade hurries towards the narrow

bend ; but see, see ! they will strike, they will be smashed to atoms. They are lost ! Push off, good bowmen !—push, brave fellows ! There !! No—they are safe ! That pole held its footing well ; and, just brushing the rock, the boat swings lightly off, and is in a moment reposing quietly by our side. The next barge approaches the dangerous point ; she also seems to be running into the very jaws of destruction, but her bilge strikes one of the hidden stones. She hangs for a moment, is swung round by the resistless current, and now, heading right down the channel, releases herself from the stone, and gains the tranquil space below the rapid. But look, look ! her crew are pulling in haste for the shore, and shouting loudly for aid : the boat is stove, and rapidly filling. We hasten to her side ; and in a few seconds eighty packs of furs are transferred from her to our craft, and we all hurry to shore, and drag her up on the beach, where she is speedily repaired.

Such are some of the incidents which attend the descent of dangerous rapids, which I need scarcely observe are formed by obstruction of the course of the stream, or by a sudden and irregular incline in its bed. Few scenes can be more stirring ; the rushing waters, full of whirlpools, hidden rocks, and counter-currents, foaming, bubbling, roaring, and

madly bounding onwards—the consciousness of risk to be incurred by a single error or accident, and the mingled cries of the boatmen, half French-Canadian, half English, present as wild a scene as could be witnessed.

The Puise, Crooked, Middle, and Knee rapids, Knee and Sandy lakes, the Serpent Rapid, the Serpent and Moose lakes, the Pin, Birchwood, and Canot Tourné rapids, were successively passed on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th; then proceeded we through the Lake of the Bear islets, this having, although called a lake, a strong current running through, and several rapids in it, of which I pause only to mention the *Rapide qui ne parle pas*, so called from its silent, though swift course, and the Cardinal, whose ways were very crooked. Next, passing the Willow Portage, we entered Trout Lake, and the Trout and Ecore rapids, pulled through the Lake des Ecores, and descended the Bigstone river, in which were several rapids; then came the Lakes des Côtes and du Diable, followed by a rapid and a portage also assigned to his Satanic Majesty. We now reached the other rapid, separating the smaller Diable from the Otter Lake. It was very deep, although turbulent, and little hazard was incurred in running it, but its ascent is not so safe. I was told that Sir John

Franklin's canoe capsized here in 1822, on his first expedition to the Mackenzie, and one of the crew was drowned. In running the Mountain Rapid one of the boats was badly "stove," but such accidents occurred so frequently, that they were disregarded, except for the delay occasioned by the necessary repairs. Almost every Hudson's Bay man is a rough carpenter, and a hole is speedily patched up with a piece of plank, some resin, and a few nails. On the 7th we met the Athabasca Brigade, and shortly afterwards encountered a brigade of boats under Mr. Anderson, of which three were laden with pemmican and flour, for the use of any portion of the sought or searching expeditions which might ascend the Mackenzie.

The grand Rapid du Fort de Traite required great judgment in its descent, having three successive stages of passage. Here five or six years ago an English half-caste, lost his life; having missed his footing in the boat of which he was bowman, he pitched headlong into the seething torrent, and was drowned: his term of service had just expired, and he was returning to the Red River colony, accompanied by his wife and family, who at the time of the disaster were quietly seated at the foot of the rapid, awaiting the descent of the boats, and

little expecting, poor things ! their sad and sudden bereavement.

This route has been travelled over for so many years, that there was a tale for almost every day's journey. Here a man was drowned ; there one was buried ; at this spot stood a fort in the time of the two companies ; in that direction a quarrel occurred between their servants ; and innumerable trifling incidents, or other points of interest, fill up the intermediate distances ; nor is superstition absent herein. In the case of the poor fellow whose death I have above noticed, there were legends of corpse candles and other omens having been seen, the night before he met his fate, by two persons at a distance from each other.

At the Portage du Bouleau the empty boats were lowered down the rapid with ropes, the stream being shelving, swift, and shallow. In the "Accursed" River an entire day was passed in poling, or dragging over stones and rocks, rough and sharp, and in many places scarcely covered by the stream, whose velocity was, notwithstanding, very considerable ; and the boats were all much injured. Cumberland Lake and House were reached on the 13th, and the "Pas," a missionary station presided over by the Rev. Mr. Hunter, next morning. A very neat church had

been built here, and great progress has, I believe, been made in the conversion of the Indians in this locality. We were indebted to Mr. Hunter for supplies of eggs, bread, and vegetables; these were grand luxuries to us in those days. The Grand Rapid at the entrance to Lake Winnipeg is one of the longest in the country: it is swift and turbulent; but being very deep, may be passed in safety with moderate caution. We were twenty-five minutes running it, and then entered Lake Winnipeg; and on the 18th reached Norway House, one of the most important of the inland stations; it is extensive, and in fine order, having a large garden in full cultivation, for which it did not seem ungrateful, producing flowers and vegetables in profusion. Chief Factors Ross and Barnston, with their families, were here, the former being about to resign the charge of the post, which he had held for many years, to the latter gentleman: I feel bound to acknowledge, with pleasure, their kind and courteous attentions.

On the 21st, two very bad rapids, called Les Portes d'Enfer, had to be run; and notwithstanding the great experience and exertions of our guide and steersmen, not a single boat escaped injury.

Oxford House, in Oxford Lake, was touched at on the 23rd; during the three following days we

descended the Hill and Steel rivers, the former of which is full of bad rapids, entered the Hay River on the 27th, and early in the morning of the 28th, reached York Factory in Hudson's Bay, the long-desired end of a wearying though interesting journey, in boats, of nearly three months.

The Hudson's Bay Company's ship, "Prince of Wales," which annually visits York Factory with supplies, and bears back a freight of furs, lay in the roads, and by her we were to return to England; but as her lading was not yet complete, we remained at the Factory for ten days, which were passed pleasantly enough in the agreeable society of its inmates.

On the 7th of September we embarked, with other passengers, on board the "Prince of Wales," sailed on the 9th, and, having had a very rapid passage of three weeks, reached Old England after an absence of nearly four years, half frantic with delight to be once more

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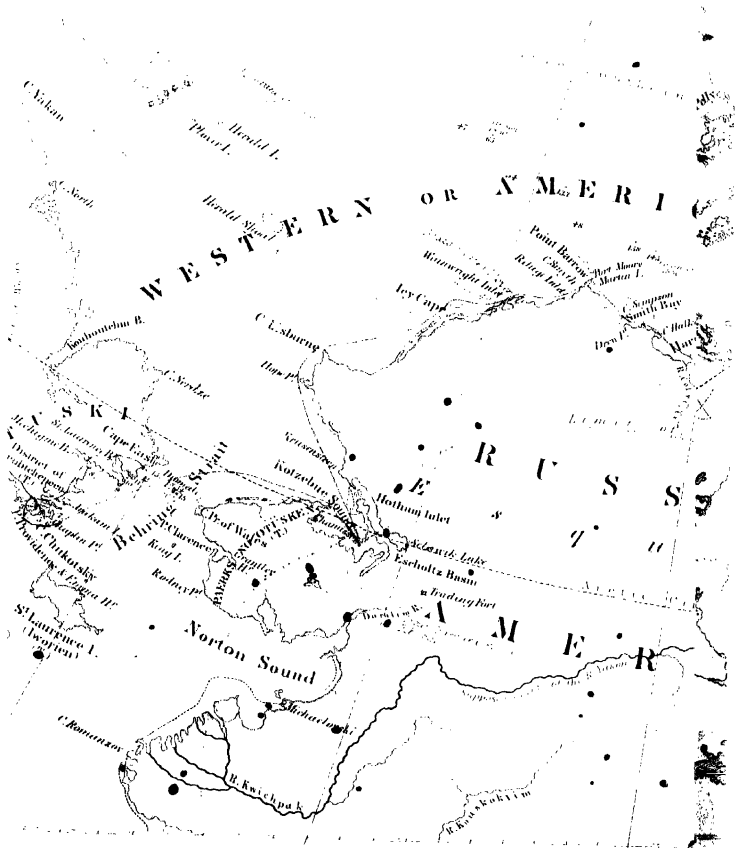
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